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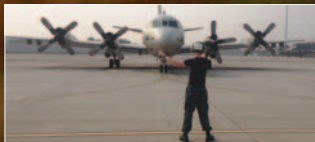
Military front & center

UKRAINE UNREST



'A new lease on life': Crimea crisis gives
NATO alliance fresh purpose | **Page 8**

FLIGHT 370



China, US vie for dominance in search for
missing Malaysia Airlines jet | **Page 10**

A NATO AWACS plane takes off from the NATO air base in Geilenkirchen, Germany, on March 12. NATO had dispatched the reconnaissance planes to fly over Poland and Romania to monitor the Crimea crisis and possible Russian troop movements.

FRANK AUGSTEIN/AP

QUOTE OF THE DAY

"We are currently facing a ticking bomb of contagious illnesses, a ticking bomb of hunger and a ticking bomb of people."

— Ahmad Fliti, deputy mayor of Arsal, Lebanon, where fighting in neighboring Syria has led to a roadblock affecting Syrian refugees as well as Lebanese residents

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2. Army general pleads guilty in sex case, says 'I failed her' as leader
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MILITARY

HHS OKs pot purchase for research

By MATTHEW PERRONE
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The U.S. government has signed off on a long-delayed study looking at marijuana as a treatment for military veterans with post-traumatic stress disorder, a development that drug researchers are hailing as a major shift in U.S. policy.

The Department of Health and Human Services' decision surprised marijuana advocates who have struggled for decades to secure federal approval for research into the drug's medical uses.

The proposal from the University of Arizona was long ago cleared by the Food and Drug Administration, but researchers had been unable to purchase marijuana from the National Institute on Drug Abuse. The agency's Mississippi research farm is the only federally-sanctioned source of the drug.

In a letter last week, HHS cleared the purchase of medical marijuana by the studies' chief financial backer, the Multidisciplinary Association for Psychedelic Studies, which supports medical research and legalization of marijuana and other drugs.



AP

Marijuana is grown in Seattle in April 2013. The Department of Health and Human Services is backing the purchase of medical marijuana for a study on treating some veterans for PTSD with the drug.

"MAPS has been working for over 22 years to start marijuana drug development research, and this is the first time we've been granted permission to purchase marijuana from NIDA," the Boston-based group said in a statement. The federal government has never before approved medical research involving

smoked or vaporized marijuana, according to MAPS.

While more than 1 million Americans take medical marijuana — usually for chronic pain — rigorous medical research into the drug's effects has been limited, in part due to federal restrictions. Marijuana remains a Schedule I substance under the federal government's Controlled Substance Act. That means the drug is considered a high-risk for abuse with no accepted medical applications.

In the past NIDA has focused its research on the risks of drug abuse and addiction, turning away researchers interested in studying the potential benefits of illegal substances.

Even with the latest green light from the Health and Human Services department, MAPS and University of Arizona Professor Suzanne Sisley must still get approval from the Drug Enforcement Administration, though they expect that clearance to come more quickly.

Physicians have long speculated that marijuana could be used to calm parts of the brain linked to overstimulation and anxiety, though little formal research has been conducted.

AF works to fine-tune reductions in personnel

By JENNIFER H. SVAN
Stars and Stripes

KAISERSLAUTERN, Germany — The Air Force's current round of unprecedented voluntary and involuntary personnel cuts won't be the last, but airmen who survive the scrutiny of retention boards this year won't be up again for compulsory separation next year, officials say.

Those airmen not wanting to take their chances still have the opportunity to opt out by choice this year if eligible. The Air Force announced Saturday that it would resume processing most voluntary applications for separation and early retirement. The move follows a brief pause the service took earlier this month to review the program.

The Air Force has said it needs to cut 25,000 airmen over the next five years as part of an effort to balance deep military spending cuts against readiness.

While the service says it remains committed to using voluntary measures first to reduce the force to targeted end-strength numbers, retention boards are still planned for later this year and will likely need to be held again next year, according to the Air Force.

"One item assessed during the pause was the pace of the programs and whether or not the Air Force could achieve required reductions on the original schedule," Saturday's announcement said. "The analysis revealed the need to include a second round of programs

in 2015."

But the Air Force wants to ensure that well-performing airmen are not subject to multiple involuntary programs. Lt. Gen. Sam Cox, the Air Force deputy chief of staff for manpower, personnel and services, in the announcement.

"Airmen who were eligible for programs during the first round in 2014 will not be eligible for the retention boards in 2015, unless they have specific negative quality force indicators," Cox said. Those can include anything from an Article 15 or failed physical fitness test to a "driving while under the influence" charge.

It appears the bulk of cuts will need to come this year and next. The Air Force needs to slash nearly 17,000 personnel to meet the fiscal 2015 active-duty end strength of 310,900, down from this year's end strength of 327,600, Rose Richeson, an Air Force spokeswoman at the Pentagon, said in an email.

To that end, the Air Force has introduced more than a dozen voluntary and involuntary separation programs this year for both enlisted members and officers. The programs are designed to rid the force of low performers and offer eligible members options for early retirement and waivers for remaining service commitments, according to the Air Force.

"The Air Force is using every available force management tool and doing everything we can to reduce the force," Richeson said

in the email. "We are maximizing voluntary programs, to include offering monetary separation incentives; however, it is likely that we will need to use involuntary programs to meet projected manpower requirements."

The service has so far this year received slightly more than 10,000 applications for voluntary separation, a number that "continues to change daily," Richeson said. Of those, almost half are ineligible for voluntary separation for reasons that include not having enough years of service to qualify for early retirement, she said.

The brief halt in processing voluntary separation applications earlier this month did not change application timelines or scheduled board dates, Richeson said. Air Force officials stopped the process to consider how best to approve certain applications that require additional waivers.

"For the first time, our force-management programs include categories of officers who have not been eligible in the past, mainly some rated and some medical specialties," she said.

To ensure the service can offer voluntary separation to these airmen, it is pursuing additional authority to waive undergraduate pilot training, professional school commitments and other requirements that would generally exempt certain airmen from separation eligibility, she said.

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MIDEAST

Afghan envoy certain pact with US to be signed soon

By EDITH M. LEDERER
The Associated Press

UNITED NATIONS — Afghanistan's U.N. ambassador said Monday he is "certain" the government will soon sign an agreement with the United States that would allow some U.S. troops to remain behind after the final withdrawal of American soldiers at the end of the year.

Zahir Tanin's statement to the U.N. Security Council was sharply at odds with Afghan President Hamid Karzai's final address to parliament on Saturday ahead of April 5 presidential elections.

Karzai reiterated he would not sign the agreement and said U.S. soldiers could leave on schedule because his military, which already protects 93 percent of the country, was ready to take over entirely.

Tanin said the Afghan people demonstrated at a Loya Jirga, or grand council, in November that they "believe in the importance of continuing strategic relations with the United States, NATO and the wider international community."

"To this end, we are certain the bilateral security agreement with the United States will be signed soon," Tanin said.

The U.S. force would train and mentor Afghan troops, and some U.S. Special Forces would also be left behind to hunt down al-Qaida.

All 10 candidates seeking the presidency have said they would sign the security agreement.

Jan Kubis, the top U.N. envoy in Afghanistan, told the council the election will mark the first democratic transfer of power in Afghanistan's history and he urged all citizens to vote and not let "spoilers and terrorists deprive you of your choice, of your future."

Even though security incidents have increased in Afghanistan, he said election-related violence is lower than in 2009 or 2010 but is on the rise.

Kubis said he is "gravely disturbed" at the Taliban's recent declaration that it will seek to disrupt the election process by "unleashing a campaign of terror."

He said a breakthrough in direct talks between the Afghan government and Taliban "remains elusive so far despite some interesting recent initiatives by the High Peace Council," which he did not disclose.

Kubis called for continued patient efforts to build "an environmental conducive to more formal efforts later, where the United Nations should, and would, have a more prominent role."

Tanin and Kubis spoke just before the Security Council voted unanimously to extend the U.N. political mission in Afghanistan until March 17, 2015.

Speaking after the vote, U.S. Deputy Ambassador Rosemary DiCarlo did not comment on the unsigned agreement with Afghanistan, but she said "serious security threats remain in Afghanistan."



Afghan police and civilians inspect the site of a suicide attack in Maymana, the capital of Faryab province, on Tuesday.

AP photos

Suicide bomber kills at least 15 in Afghanistan

By RAHIM FAIEZ
The Associated Press

KABUL — A suicide bomber riding a rickshaw blew himself up outside a checkpoint near a market in northern Afghanistan on Tuesday, killing at least 15 civilians, officials said, in the latest attack in the countdown to next month's presidential elections.

Nobody immediately claimed responsibility for the attack in the capital of Faryab province, but it happened in an area where the Taliban and allied militant groups are active. The Taliban have threatened a campaign of violence to disrupt the April 5 vote, which will choose a new president to lead the country as foreign troops prepare to end their combat mission by the end of the year.

The attacker was approaching a checkpoint where cars were being searched on a road leading to the governor's compound in Maymana, the Faryab provincial capital, when he detonated explosives hidden in the rickshaw, the officials said.

Most of the victims were vendors peddling fresh bread and shoppers at the busy roadside market area.

Deputy Gov. Abdul Satar Barez said 15 people were killed and 46 people were wounded — 27 of them seriously — in the explosion that struck some 200 yards away from the governor's compound.

Women, children and employees of the nearby electricity department were among the casualties, Barez said but he couldn't provide an immediate breakdown.

"They killed innocent people in a place where locals were just trying to earn 10 Afghanis (about



Afghan women line up at a school in Kabul to have their picture taken to register for the upcoming presidential elections.

'Most of the casualties were either selling bread or buying it.'

Abdul Satar Barez
deputy governor of Maymana, Afghanistan

20 cents) to buy a piece of bread. Most of the casualties were either selling bread or buying it," he said.

The Taliban have staged numerous attacks in Faryab, which lies far from their traditional strongholds in southern and eastern Afghanistan. In October 2012, a suicide bomber struck a mosque packed with senior regional officials in Maymana, killing 41 people.

Afghan civilians are frequently caught up in the violence as insurgents battle Afghan and international troops in an effort to undermine the Western-backed government. The United Nations

said 2,959 civilians were killed and 5,656 were wounded last year, a 14 percent increase from the previous year.

The Taliban deny that they target civilians, but the U.N. report blamed 74 percent of all civilian casualties last year on insurgents.

The winner of the April 5 vote will replace President Hamid Karzai, who is barred by the constitution from seeking a third term.

On Tuesday, Karzai nominated Mohammad Yunus Qanooni, a well-known ethnic Tajik politician, as his new first vice president. If approved by parliament, Qanooni will replace Mohammed Qasim Fahim, who died on March 9.

Pakistan may take US military equipment

By TIM CRAIG
The Washington Post

ISLAMABAD — The U.S. military may have another option for disposing of \$7 billion worth of armored vehicles and other equipment it's struggling to get rid of now that the Afghan War is ending.

Some of it could be driven across the border and handed over to Pakistan, part of an effort by the Pentagon to unload excess military supplies to U.S. allies at no cost.

The discussions between American and Pakistani officials have been going on for months and center on leftover military hardware that the United States does not want to pay to ship or fly home.

Although no final decisions have been made, Pakistan is particularly interested in the U.S. Army's Mine Resistant Ambush Protected vehicles, which the Pentagon

officials say will have limited strategic value as U.S. forces withdraw from Afghanistan this year.

But with Pakistani military expected to be battling Taliban insurgents for years, the MRAPs could help Pakistani forces slow their high

causality rate of more than 20,000 dead or injured troops since 2001.

"We will not take it for the sake of just taking it, and we will not take it because it's free. We will take it because we need it."

senior Pakistani military official

causality rate of more than 20,000 dead or injured troops since 2001.

"We will not take it for the sake of just taking it, and we will not take it because it's free," said one senior Pakistani military official, who spoke on the condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to discuss the negotiations. "We will take it because we need it."

About 150,000 Pakistani soldiers are along the country's border with Afghanistan, and U.S. officials are counting on them to help keep the pressure on militant groups after 2014.

Pakistan's troops remain vulnerable to roadside bombs and explosive devices, and the armored vehicles can withstand far less force than a U.S.-made MRAP, officials said.

The United States had been a major weapons supplier to Pakistan for decades, but those sales slowed dramatically after the U.S. military said that it killed Osama bin Laden in Pakistan in 2011.

Over the past year, the tension has eased, and leaders in both countries have stressed that they need to work together to together to try to ensure regional stability after U.S.-led coalition withdraws from Afghanistan.

MILITARY

DOD issues new rules after Navy Yard review

By JON HARPER

Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — The Defense Department issued new directives Tuesday to try to mitigate the “insider threat” to DOD personnel and facilities, based on the findings of three reviews of last year’s Navy Yard shooting.

The reviews were initiated after Aaron Alexis, a former sailor and contractor with The Experts Inc., shot and killed 12 people at the Washington Navy Yard in Washington on Sept. 16. Four others were wounded in the attack, which lasted more than an hour as Alexis roamed the halls of Building 17 with a shotgun. He was eventually shot and killed by emergency responders.

At the time of the attack, Alexis possessed a security clearance and gained access to the facility by presenting a valid access card.

He was authorized to perform updates to classified computers at the base.

In September, the Navy launched an investigation into the full range of security, contractor, personnel and other factors related to the incident, including a probe of Alexis’ history. Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel also initiated a similar internal DOD review of the incident as well as an independent one led by former Assistant Secretary of Defense Paul Stockton and retired Adm. Eric Olson. All three reviews were completed in November, and they included recommendations about steps the DOD and the Navy should take to reduce the likelihood of such attacks.

On Tuesday, Hagel ordered the DOD to take the following measures:

■ Implement a continual evaluation program of personnel with

access to the DOD’s facilities or classified information, including DOD contractors, military and civilian personnel. Although individuals with security clearances undergo periodic reinvestigations, Hagel is directing the establishment of automated reviews of cleared personnel that will continually pull information from law enforcement and other relevant databases to help trigger an alert if derogatory information becomes available, such as an arrest of a person with a clearance.

■ Establish an inside-threat management and analysis center that can quickly analyze the results of these automated record checks, help connect the dots and determine whether follow-up action is needed. It will also support DOD components to ensure appropriate action is taken on each case.

■ Centralize authority and ac-

countability for physical and personal security under a single staff assistant within the Office of the Undersecretary of Defense for Intelligence.

■ Accelerate the development of the Defense Manpower Data Center’s identity management enterprise services architecture to enable DOD security officers to share access, control information and continuously vet individuals against U.S. government databases.

Hagel said the DOD will also consider the following based on recommendations made by Stockton and Olson:

■ Reduce the number of personnel holding secret-level security clearances by at least 10 percent.

■ Reduce the DOD’s reliance on background investigations conducted by the Office of Personnel Management and undertake a comprehensive analysis of

the potential benefits of returning the clearance review process to the DOD.

■ Develop more effective measures to screen recruits, further destigmatize mental health treatment and ensure the quality of mental health care within the DOD.

Hagel has directed Undersecretary of Defense for Intelligence Michael Vickers to develop an implementation plan based on the recommendations of these reviews and provide a progress report in June.

“I think we all understand that open and free societies are always vulnerable,” Hagel told reporters at the Pentagon. “But together, we’re going to do everything possible to provide our people as safe and secure a workplace as possible.”

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Witness: Suggestive skit mocked Sinclair, accuser

By JEFFREY COLLINS

The Associated Press

FORT BRAGG, N.C. — A witness at the sentencing of an Army general who admitted to having inappropriate relationships with three subordinates testified Tuesday about a bawdy skit several years ago intended to depict the man and his primary accuser.

Lt. Col. Benjamin Bigelow said the skit at a 2010 party in Germany depicted suggestive acts between soldiers dressed up to be Brig. Gen. Jeffrey Sinclair and the woman with whom he has admitted a three-year affair. The woman had also accused him of sexual assault, but those charges were dropped in a plea deal.

Bigelow said the skit was performed during a party at which Brig. Gen. Jeffrey Sinclair was being honored. It involved a soldier dressed up as Sinclair and a soldier dressed as a woman in a brown wig to represent the captain who was his primary accuser, Bigelow testified.

The character in the wig “moved in front of the Sinclair character’s crotch and offered to do something for him,” Bigelow said. “There was absolutely no question.”

Sinclair’s wife was at the party. Bigelow said Sinclair’s wife was “shockingly shocked, and even dismayed.” During cross-examination, Bigelow said the accuser was not at the party.

Sinclair has pleaded to several lesser violations of military law in the plea deal that was accepted by a military judge on Monday. Prosecutors finished their part of the sentencing hearing before lunch. Sinclair’s attorneys were expected to start calling about 20 character witnesses Tuesday afternoon.

Seeking a lenient sentence, his lawyers will aim to downplay the seriousness of the charges to which he pleaded guilty and call witnesses to discuss the character of the former deputy commander of the 82nd Airborne.

The captain who’s his primary accuser took the stand Monday and said she can’t trust anyone and fears her superiors will take advantage of her. The Associated Press generally does not identify those who say they were victims of sexual assault.

Sinclair, 51, had been accused of twice forcing the female captain under his command to perform oral sex during the three-year extramarital affair. A lawyer who advised the accuser issued a statement Monday saying she stood by the assault accusation.

The married general pleaded guilty earlier this month to having improper relationships with three subordinate officers, including the captain. He also pleaded guilty to adultery, which is a crime in the military.

The most serious accusations went to trial, but the court-martial was halted after the military judge found evidence that there may have been improper influence in a decision to reject a previous plea deal. The new deal was then struck, including Sinclair’s admission that his treatment of the captain was “unwarranted, unjustified and unnecessary,” broke military law and mentally harmed her.

Sinclair also admitted Monday to abusing a government credit card he used while traveling to visit his mistress, using indecent language to demean female officers and contacting the accuser after being told not to.

Ultimately, the judge will give Sinclair a sentence that can’t



THE FAYETTEVILLE (N.C.) OBSERVER/AP
Brig. Gen. Jeffrey Sinclair shakes hands with his defense attorney Ellen C. Brotman outside the Fort Bragg, N.C., courthouse on Monday.

exceed terms in the agreement struck between defense lawyers and military attorneys over the weekend, but has not been made public. The legal agreement is likely to require a punishment far less severe than the maximum penalties of 2 1/2 years in prison and dismissal from the Army.

The Army’s case against Sinclair started to crumble as questions arose about whether his primary accuser had lied in a pre-trial hearing.

It was further thrown into jeopardy last week when Judge Col. James Pohl said the military may have improperly pressed ahead with the trial to send a message about its determination to curb rape and other widespread misconduct. Under the military code of justice, the decision was supposed to be decided solely on the evidence, not its broader political implications.

A different commander accepted the plea deal over the weekend.

SIGAR: Dam project may no longer be viable

By HEATH DRUZIN

Stars and Stripes

A controversial dam project in Afghanistan is now so over budget that even by the estimates of the U.S. government aid agency that estimates to fund it, the cost has far surpassed its potential benefits, the top U.S. watchdog in Afghanistan said.

“This cost increase indicates that the (project) may no longer be economically viable,” Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction John Sopko wrote in an inquiry letter to the U.S. Agency for International Development requesting an explanation of the causes and rationale for what he says are major cost increases in the project.

The top USAID official for Afghanistan and Pakistan, Donald L. Larry Sampier, said the inspector general’s letter used the wrong number for his initial calculation and that the estimates derived from that are also much too high.

“The letter is rendered moot by the fact that they used the wrong number to begin with,” he said.

The project is the Kandahar Helmand Power Program, designed to spur economic growth through increased electricity production in Helmand and Kandahar provinces, the two deadliest regions of Afghanistan for international troops over the course of the 12-year war.

The project has become emblematic of all that has gone wrong with the international reconstruction effort in Afghanistan.

USAID built the Kajaki Dam in the 1950s, and subsequently installed two turbines to generate power, leaving an empty space for a third unit. Work to improve the dam started shortly after the U.S. invasion of Afghanistan in 2001.

One aspect that has proven especially difficult is the installation of the third turbine that would greatly increase power production to Kandahar, Afghanistan’s second city and the spiritual heartland of the Taliban.

The original estimated cost of installing the turbine was just under \$17 million, with completion expected in 2005. But the work is still unfinished even as U.S. forces are pulling out of the province as part of the withdrawal of coalition combat troops.

USAID has now pledged \$75 million to install the third turbine in the dam’s power station, which will be run by Afghanistan’s national utility. With that sum, the program costs have now ballooned to \$345 million, which is \$32 million more than what the aid agency said could be spent before the program became unviable, according to SIGAR’s calculations.

Two contractors have already failed to install the turbine amid major fighting and insurgent attacks, and a third has now been hired to complete the work. The latest contractor still will have to negotiate violent conditions on the ground and daunting logistics challenges, especially as the U.S. military presence has shrunk in the area and the still fledgling Afghan security forces have taken over responsibility for protecting the dam.

USAID officials say they plan to push through, despite the challenges.

If someone someday does manage to turn on the turbine, it could be a boon to the people of Afghanistan’s south, especially Kandahar City, the country’s second-largest metropolis, which suffers chronic electricity shortages.

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MILITARY



DONALD R. WHITE JR./Courtesy of the U.S. Navy

Sailors assigned to the guided-missile destroyer USS Bulkeley prepare to conduct a visit, board, search and seizure exercise in the Gulf of Oman.

Navy in push to fill billets

By HENDRICK SIMOES
Stars and Stripes

U.S. Navy officials are determined to fill 7,000 vacant billets at sea by giving detailers increased authority to alter transfer dates.

It's the latest of several policy changes in recent years to push sailors to go haze gray and under-way. Two years ago, the Navy had 15,000 unfilled billets at sea, officials say.

The new policy, which was released Friday, authorizes detailers to transfer enlisted sailors six months before their projected rotation date and as late as six months after their PRD.

There are two main reasons for the change: to give detailers the flexibility to curtail shore assignments in order to fill sea duty vacancies on time with qualified personnel, and to hold sailors at sea longer if a qualified replacement can't be found for their billet.

"That's where we need them the most," said Lt. Cmdr. Chris Servello, a spokesman for the chief of naval personnel. "That's where our Navy is going to be focused now and into the future."

Servello stressed the importance of filling and preventing gaps from occurring in sea duty billets. He said he expects the change will affect about 2 percent of transferring sailors. "We don't think we will have to do it very often, but if we need to, we need to make sure we have the authority to make that happen," he said.

The added flexibility to fill billets at sea may have unintended

consequences, such as increased uncertainty for sailors who may get short notice they are transferring early or staying at sea longer.

"We absolutely are conscious of the stress this can cause sailors and families," Servello said. He urged sailors to keep in close touch with their career counselors to mitigate that uncertainty.

Chief Petty Officer Mario Maytorena, the command career counselor at the U.S. Navy base in Bahrain, foresees concern by sailors about going to shore-duty assignments without knowing if they will complete a full tour. Maytorena describes various scenarios in which sailors on shore duty may or may not be affected, depending on a sailor's tour length, location, rate and qualifications.

"What we are here to do is to provide the guidance for the sailors," he said, adding that it's a career counselors' job to dissect and explain to sailors how this might affect them, specifically.

In some cases, sailors may be informed 18 months into a 36-month shore assignment that they may be sent back to sea early.

"The detailers are going to look to give sailors a max heads up so that it isn't a surprise," Servello said. He acknowledged that sometimes that isn't possible.

Detailers will seek out volunteers first, officials say. The change may also be an opportunity for sailors who feel stuck in their current shore assignments to opt for a more career-enhanc-

ing shipboard billet that may pay more because of the Navy's seapay allowance.

One consequence in yanking some sailors from shore duty early is that some shore-duty billets may be vacant for months. Navy officials say they recognize that there may be a short-term impact to shore-duty billets, but they are comfortable they can overcome it.

Maytorena said sailors and commands will still have a 30-day window to submit a rebuttal if a sailor's early departure from a shore command results in undue impact to the mission or the sailor. But he cautions that manning the fleet will still be the likely priority. "Every sailor is important to the command, but we just have to ensure what works best to support the fleet," he said.

For months the Navy has been focused on its "forward presence." Earlier this month, the Navy announced its first increase in pay in more than a decade — 25 percent for most sailors.

In a worldwide all-hands call on March 5, the chief of naval personnel, Vice Adm. Bill Moran, told sailors the Navy would be asked to do more forward, informing sailors of potentially longer deployments as the war in Afghanistan wound down.

"As those folks pull back, you've got to have a defensive back out there somewhere to make sure no one gets into mischief," he said.

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S. Korea cutting forces by a fifth over 8 years

By ASHLEY ROWLAND
AND YOO KYONG CHANG
Stars and Stripes

SEOUL, South Korea — South Korea plans to cut its armed forces by nearly one-fifth over the next eight years while increasing the number of noncommissioned officers with specialized skills, according to the Ministry of National Defense.

The military will cut its active-duty force to 522,000 from 640,000 by 2022, with the Ministry of National Defense citing the country's declining birthrate. All able-bodied males are required to complete two years of military service, but officials say fewer males will be available to serve.

The bulk of the cuts will hit the Army, which relies heavily on males completing their mandatory service, with the number of soldiers expected to drop to 387,000 from 498,000.

Other branches are expected to maintain their current levels: 41,000 for the Navy, 65,000 for the Air Force and 29,000 for the Marines.

Under the plan, announced earlier this month, the number of noncommissioned officers will increase to 152,000 from 116,000.

"South Korea's ability to defend itself should not be weakened," an MND spokesman said, speaking on customary condition of anonymity. "So we're changing our future corps and innovating."

The MND official said budget constraints would not affect plans to increase MND numbers as long as the budget increases each year by 7.2 percent. However, the National Assembly has approved only a 4 percent increase in defense spending for this year, another MND official said.

U.S. Forces Korea would not answer questions about how South Korea's proposed cuts would affect the 28,500 U.S. troops regularly stationed on the peninsula, or whether U.S. military officials have concerns about the plan.

Instead, USFK said in an email: "The ROK military is a highly capable and professional force and is increasing its ability to lead the defense of its country. Together, the ROK-U.S. Alliance will continue to defend the Republic of Korea."

An MND spokesman would not say whether the U.S. had expressed concerns about the force reductions, but said they have "nothing to do with the U.S."

The announcement of South Korea's cuts comes amid ongoing

concerns about the threat posed by North Korea, which have prompted Washington and Seoul to consider delaying the scheduled December 2015 handover of wartime operational control of allied forces from a U.S. to a South Korean commander.

Seoul requested the delay following North Korea's third nuclear test in February 2013, followed by an extended period of unusually bellicose threats from Pyongyang.

North Korea has the world's fourth-largest military, with 70 percent of its ground forces and 50 percent of its air and naval forces stationed within 100 miles of the Demilitarized Zone, according to a Department of Defense assessment released earlier this month.

'South Korea's ability to defend itself should not be weakened. So we're changing our future corps and innovating.'

Gen. Ray Odierno, the U.S. Army's chief of staff, said last week that a war on the Korean peninsula would be "incredibly difficult" and "incredibly dangerous," and warned

about the possibility of miscalculation escalating a potential conflict.

The announced shrinkage in South Korea's forces comes during a sensitive period for Washington and Seoul. After months of negotiations, the two nations approved a new defense spending agreement in January that increases South Korea's contributions toward the upkeep of U.S. troops on the peninsula by nearly 6 percent.

South Korea's National Assembly has yet to approve the agreement, with some politicians insisting it should be renegotiated.

A U.S. Senate Armed Services Committee found in an April report that South Korean contributions were not keeping pace with the growth in U.S. costs, and that in 2012, U.S. spending was expected to outpace South Korean contributions by \$330 million.

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NATION

Lawyer: Limit gory marathon photos

Prosecution pushes to bar bombing suspect's viewing of victim images to protect families

By DENISE LAVOIE
The Associated Press

BOSTON — Federal prosecutors asked a judge Monday to bar Boston Marathon bombing suspect Dzhokhar Tsarnaev from seeing some of the gruesome autopsy photos of the three people killed in the attack.

In a court filing, prosecutors said Tsarnaev should be allowed to look only at autopsy photos that will be used during his trial and sentencing.

They said he should not be allowed to see the many other photos that will not be used against him in court. "Allowing photos of the mutilated bodies of the victims to be viewed by the man accused of mutilating them would needlessly revictimize the family members in the same way that innocent children who are photographed pornographically are revictimized whenever those photos are seen by others," prosecutors wrote.

Miriam Conrad, one of Tsarnaev's lawyers, declined to comment on the request. In their motion, prosecutors say they told the defense that if Tsarnaev were allowed to view all the photographs, the government would continue to make them available for lawyers' review but

would not provide copies. They said Tsarnaev's lawyers "refused to accept any limitation on Tsarnaev's ability to view the autopsy photos and repeated their demand for copies of all of them."

Tsarnaev, 19, has pleaded not guilty to 30 federal charges, including the use of a weapon of mass destruction. More than half the charges carry a possible death sentence.

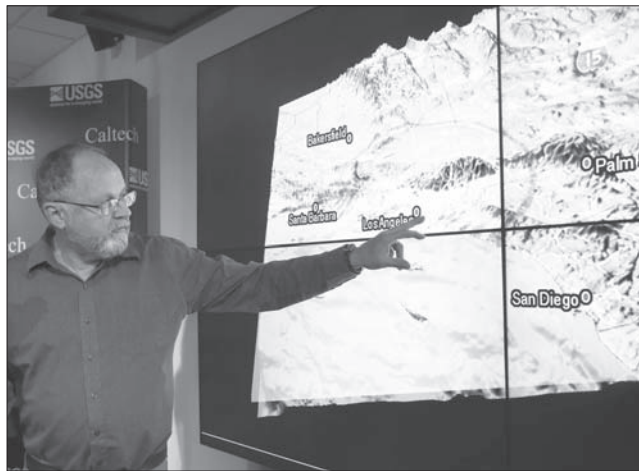
Prosecutors allege that he and his brother, Tamerlan Tsarnaev, built two pressure cooker bombs and placed them near the finish line of last year's marathon. Twin explosions killed two women and an 8-year-old boy and injured more than 260.

Tamerlan Tsarnaev died following a shootout with police several days after the April 15 marathon.

In their motion, prosecutors ask to limit Tsarnaev's access to autopsy photos of the three bombing victims and MIT police Officer Sean Collier, who prosecutors allege was killed by the Tsarnaev brothers on April 18 as they fled.

Suffolk University Law School professor Christopher Dearborn said he believes it may be difficult to persuade a judge to restrict Tsarnaev's access to the autopsy photos, especially because he could be sentenced to death.

"The problem here is if there's any possibility that there's something in those photos that could be helpful or potentially helpful to him in a trial or in sentencing, he has to be allowed access to them," Dearborn said.



Nick Ut/AP

Egil Hauksson a Caltech seismologist, talks about an early morning earthquake during a news conference at Caltech in Pasadena, Calif., on Monday. The pre-dawn quake rolled across the Los Angeles basin on Monday, rattling residents from the San Fernando Valley to Long Beach but causing no major damage.

Quake rattles Los Angeles basin

By CHRISTOPHER WEBER
The Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — A pre-dawn earthquake rolled across the Los Angeles basin Monday, rattling nerves and shaking buildings along a 150-mile swath of Southern California but causing no major damage.

The magnitude-4.4 quake was centered 2 miles from Encino and 15 miles west-northwest of the downtown civic center, according to the U.S. Geological Survey.

USGS seismologist Robert Graves called it a "typical" Southern California quake and

said expectations were that damage would be slight, if it occurred at all.

Los Angeles police and fire officials said there were no immediate reports of damage.

Encino resident Joann Smith described the initial jolt as a "big crash" that shook her house.

"My dog got out of bed, and she came looking for me," Smith said. "She was shivering terribly."

The 6:25 a.m. quake occurred at a depth of about 5 miles. There were several aftershocks, including one of magnitude 2.7 that caused very minor shaking, Graves said.

The quake was felt as far away

as Orange County to the south and Santa Barbara to the north.

It was one of the largest to hit Los Angeles since the magnitude-6.7 Northridge quake killed several dozen people and caused \$25 billion in damage two decades ago, USGS seismologist Lucy Jones told KABC-TV.

A magnitude-4.7 quake struck near Inglewood in 2009, she said.

The quake was somewhat unusual because of its location within the Santa Monica Mountains, a 40-mile-long range that crosses Los Angeles and stretches west through Malibu to Ventura County.

Foods rich in omega-3 may not help the heart, analysis finds

By NICOLE OSTROW
Bloomberg News

Food rich in fish oils such as omega-3 don't reduce heart disease risk, calling into question national dietary guidelines that promote the fats as beneficial to cardiovascular health, an analysis of 72 studies found.

The research showed insufficient support for nutritional recommendations by groups such as the American Heart Association that advocate high consumption of polyun-

saturated fats such as omega-3, found in fish such as salmon, and omega-6, found in corn and sunflower oils, as well as some nuts and seeds. The study appeared in Monday's *Annals of Internal Medicine*.

The findings are the latest to show that supplements and vitamins don't work as well as touted to help patients prevent diseases. While past studies showed fish oil can lower unhealthy blood fats and blood pressure and reduce the risk of a second heart attack, research in recent years con-

tradicted those findings, suggesting it has limited heart benefits.

A study presented at the heart association's 2012 meeting found that taking fish oil, a form of omega-3 fatty acid, after cardiac surgery didn't prevent a form of irregular heartbeat that can cause blood clots and strokes. Also that year, a review of 20 trials over 24 years published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* found that fish oil supplements didn't lower the risk for a range of illnesses, including heart

attacks, strokes or death. A study in 2010 published in *JAMA* found fish oil didn't prevent recurrences of atrial fibrillation.

Current heart association guidelines recommend people consume about two servings of fatty fish each week. They also recommend that 5 percent to 10 percent of total daily calories come from omega-6 sources. The guidelines suggest replacing saturated fats, found in meat, full-fat dairy products and coconut and palm oils with polyunsaturated fats.

Report finds lapses in response to LAX shooter

The Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — A report on the emergency response to a shooting last year at Los Angeles International Airport, which left a security screener dead, cites serious shortcomings in communication between agencies that left major commanders in the dark

and a long lag in establishing a coordinated response.

The lengthy report presented Tuesday to airport commissioners cites the "heroism" of officers who shot and took suspect Paul Ciancia into custody after he'd killed a Transportation Security Administration officer and injured three people on Nov. 1.

But it details lapses in coordination and technology between police and fire departments, which set up multiple command posts at different locations that didn't unify for 45 minutes. The first meeting among commanders didn't occur until more than 1½ hours after the shooting began.

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NATION



Ed ANDRESKI/AP

Abel Bautista and his wife, Guadalupe, pose with their four children at their home in Thornton, Colo. From left are Kolby, 12; Wendy, 8; Guadalupe; Able; Kimberli, 7; and Able, 10. Abel Bautista and his wife entered the U.S. illegally decades ago and have been fighting deportation since a 2012 traffic stop.

Activists push to halt deportations

By NICHOLAS RICCARDI
The Associated Press

DENVER — President Barack Obama's surprise announcement last week that his administration would change its deportation policy to become more "humane" shows how the immigration battle has narrowed after months of congressional deadlock.

As recently as last year, immigrant rights activists, along with an unusually broad coalition of business, labor and religious groups, were united in their demand that Congress pass a sweeping bill to both remove the threat of deportation from many of the 11 million people here illegally and eventually make them citizens. Now activists just want to stop deportations.

They have pressured Obama to limit the number of people sent back overseas, which led to his administration's announcement Thursday of a review of deportation policies after a meeting with the Hispanic Congressional Caucus. Activists also are pushing state legislatures to end participation in a program to help federal immigration authorities deport people and chaining themselves across entrances to local jails or immigration detention centers.

"We need relief and we need it soon," said Reyna Montoya, 23, of Phoenix, whose father is fighting deportation and who co-wrote an open letter with dozens of other young activists urging immigrant rights groups to stand down on the citizenship issue. "People who are directly affected just want peace. Later on they'll worry about becoming citizens."

Immigrant rights groups still want to win

citizenship for many who are in the U.S. without legal permission. But the shift to deportation relief shows the desperation felt by immigrant communities as deportations have continued, even as the president and many in Congress say they support changing the law to allow some of those people to stay in the U.S.

It also represents the possible splintering of the diverse coalition for an immigration bill that would overhaul the system by expanding citizenship. And the more aggressive, confrontational tactics also raise the risk of a public backlash.

"One picture of a cop with a bloody nose and it's all over for these people," Mark Krikorian, of the Center for Immigration Studies, which favors greater restrictions on immigration, said of the activists.

The change comes after many expected Congress to pass a sweeping immigration overhaul last year. Republicans have been torn between some in their base who want to step up deportations and others alarmed at how Hispanics, Asians and other fast-growing communities are increasingly leaning Democratic.

The Senate in June passed a bipartisan bill to legalize, and eventually grant citizen-

ship to, many of the 11 million people in the U.S. illegally. The bill died in the Republican-controlled House.

At the state level, activists have had notable successes. The biggest victory came last year in California when Gov. Jerry Brown signed the Trust Act, barring California police from participating in Secure Communities. Immigrant rights groups are trying to replicate that legislation in Illinois and Massachusetts.

Driving the efforts are cases like that of Abel Bautista, who was stopped for traveling 8 mph over the speed limit on a Colorado interstate in 2012 and has been fighting deportation ever since. At first he was not too worried, because he expected an immigration overhaul last year to make the case moot. Now he worries about the lack of legislative action and the trauma inflicted on his three U.S. citizen children as his case drags on.

"We're just left hanging at loose ends," Bautista said in an interview, recounting how his children's performance at school has deteriorated and how they sob when he leaves for court hearings. "If the community unifies and has more demonstrations, maybe they will listen to us."

4 We're just left hanging at loose ends. If the community unifies and has more demonstrations, maybe they will listen to us. 1

Abel Bautista

Colorado resident fighting deportation

Reports show transparency complaints dog Obama

By JOSH HICKS
The Washington Post

WASHINGTON — Independent watchdog reviews show that the Obama administration is still struggling in its fifth year to develop the most transparent government in U.S. history, a pledge President Barack Obama made his first day in office.

The Center for Effective Government handed out failing grades to seven of the 15 agencies it examined for its annual government transparency report card, which the group released Monday.

The State Department performed worst, finishing with a score of 37 percent. The Department of Homeland Security and the Pentagon followed with grades of 51 percent. The top performers included the Social Security Administration (83 percent), the Justice Department (81 percent) and the Environmental Protection Agency (78 percent).

The scores measured performance in processing requests, establishing rules for answering the requests and creating easy-to-use websites.

"There are agencies out there doing great with processing, so all of this is possible," said Sean Moulton, a Freedom of Information Act expert with the Center for Effective Government. "The real problem is getting agencies to be consistent and learn from each other about how to do a better job."

An Associated Press analysis of federal data found that the Obama administration got more secretive last year, censoring or denying FOIA access to government files more than at any time in the president's tenure.

The administration has also cited more legal exceptions to justify withholding materials and refused to turn over more files quickly when they are considered newsworthy, and most agencies took longer to answer records requests, according to the AP study.

On a positive note, the analysis showed that the administration reduced the number of old requests and waived copying fees more often last year.

A third analysis from the National Security Archive at George Washington University found that 54 percent of all federal agencies have ignored directives from Obama and Attorney General Eric Holder in 2009 calling for a "presumption of disclosure" with FOIA requests. That number is down from about 70 percent last year.

That report also said that nearly half of all agencies have not updated their FOIA regulations to comply with 2007 amendments that Congress made to the law. The release of the reviews coincided with Sunshine Week, when transparency advocates promote open government and issue reports gauging how well federal agencies have complied with FOIA rules.

States mull \$0 community college tuition

The Associated Press

PORTLAND, Ore. — Nothing sparks consumer demand like the word "free," and politicians in some states have proposed the idea of providing that incentive to get young people to attend community college.

Amid worries that U.S. youth

are losing a global skills race, supporters of a no-tuition policy see expanding access to community college as a way to boost educational attainment so the emerging workforces in their states look good to employers.

Of course, such plans aren't free for taxpayers, and legislators in Oregon and Tennessee are decid-

ing whether free tuition regardless of family income is the best use of public money. A Mississippi bill passed the State House, but failed in the Senate.

The debate comes in a midterm election year in which income inequality and the burdens of student debt are likely going to be significant issues.

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UKRAINE UNREST

Ukraine crisis gives NATO new purpose

By Raf Casert
The Associated Press

BRUSSELS — With a deafening thunder, the first NATO AWACS surveillance plane pierces the milky morning sky over Germany's Geilenkirchen Air Base, on its way to monitor the skies above Ukraine. Listen very carefully, and you can also hear the NATO alliance roaring back into the geopolitical arena.

Quite a turnaround for a 65-year-old military organization increasingly condemned by many as a costly anachronism.

The crisis around Ukraine "is providential from the point of view of NATO," said Nick Witney, of the European Council on Foreign Relations. "It gives it a new lease on life."

NATO Secretary-General Anders Fogh Rasmussen left Tuesday for talks in Washington bound to center on the evolving crisis. At the same time, Vice President Joe Biden arrived in Poland in a clear show that the United States and NATO stand together with its worried partners in the military alliance.

On the same day, Russian President Vladimir Putin approved the annexation of Crimea and warned he does not want any military organization to be active at Russia's "fence."

"At a moment like this, we all appreciate in a special way the fact that we are in NATO," Polish President Bronislaw Komorowski said recently.

The NATO alliance was forged in the wake of World War II, when the West was facing the Soviet Union in a direct confrontation between free-market capitalism and communism, an ideological battle that basically sliced Europe in two.

Essential during the Cold War when it faced the Soviet-backed Warsaw Pact in a standoff involving thousands of nuclear missiles, NATO's role has been questioned since the demise of communism, and even more so after the Balkan wars of the 1990s.

It has expanded to include many former Warsaw Pact members and stretched its geographical title of North Atlantic Treaty Organization to the limit with far-flung operations in Afghanistan and Libya. But it was Putin who gave it fresh credibility with his incursion into Ukraine's Crimean peninsula.

On top of the deployment of the AWACS planes, Britain decided Monday to send British Typhoon jetfighters next month to



FRANK AUGSTEIN/AP

A NATO AWACS plane takes off from Geilenkirchen Air Base, Germany, on Wednesday.

Putin signs treaty adding Crimea to Russia

The Associated Press

MOSCOW — With a sweep of his pen, President Vladimir Putin added Crimea to the map of Russia on Tuesday, describing the move as correcting past injustice and responding to what he called Western encroachment upon Russia's vital interests.

While his actions were met with cheers in Crimea and Russia, Ukraine's new government called Putin a threat to the whole world, and U.S. Vice President Joe Biden warned that the U.S. and Europe will impose further sanctions against Moscow.

"The world has seen through Russia's actions and has rejected the flawed logic," Biden said as he met with anxious Ukrainian leaders in Poland.

In an emotional 40-minute speech televised live from the Kremlin's white-and-gold St. George hall, the Russian leader said he was merely restoring order to history by incorporating Crimea. "In people's hearts and minds, Crimea has always been an integral part of Russia," he declared.

He dismissed Western criticism of Sunday's Crimean referendum — in which residents of the strategic Black Sea peninsula overwhelmingly backed leaving Ukraine and joining Russia — as a manifestation of the West's double standards.

Often interrupted by applause, Putin said the rights of ethnic Russians in Ukraine had been abused by the new Ukrainian government and insisted that Crimea's vote to join Russia was in line with international law and reflected its right for

boost NATO's Baltic air policing mission. The U.S. Air Force currently patrols air boundaries of the Baltics with 10 F-15C Eagle fighter jets.

Last week, the United States

deployed some 300 troops and a dozen F-16 fighters to Poland for joint exercises but also to support its NATO partner.

Suddenly, nations that were once controlled by Moscow crave



VADIM GHIRDA/AP

Thousands of pro-Russians watch a live broadcast of President Vladimir Putin's speech in the Crimean city of Sevastopol on Tuesday.

self-determination.

Also on Tuesday, a Ukrainian military spokesman says a serviceman was killed and another injured when a base in Crimea was stormed by armed men. Vladislav Seleznev said on his Facebook page that the base in the Crimean capital Simferopol was stormed by unknown armed men on Tuesday. He said a truck bearing a Russian flag was used in the operation.

NATO's protection.

"It would be hard to imagine any stronger guarantees of Poland's security," Komorowski said as his country marked 15 years of NATO membership last week.

Ukraine proves to be a case in point. It is a NATO partner, but not a member, so it does not fall under the Article 5 collective defense clause that states that an attack on one ally is considered an attack on all.

If Ukraine had had such protection, NATO would have had to ensure military protection and go to war if necessary.

"Yes. Yes — there is no question about that," said Steven Blockmans, of the Centre for European Policy Studies. "If Ukraine were a NATO country,

'At a moment like this, we all appreciate in a special way the fact that we are in NATO.'

Bronislaw Komorowski
president of Poland

we would be talking about the invasion and occupation of a part of a country without that country's central government's consent."

If Russia were to do the same thing in a NATO country, such as one of the Baltic states that have a sizeable Russian minority, "Article 5 would describe an obligation to come to the defense of the (country), including the use of armed forces," Blockmans said. "If Russia were to take that gamble, there would be no stepping back from the brink of war for the NATO allies."

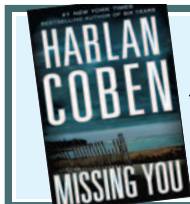
Such is the fear of Russia that some now want NATO to send ground troops to the Baltic states to counter Moscow's threat.

"Increased presence of NATO allies in our region would make sense, both militarily as well as serving as a deterrent," Estonian Defense Minister Urmas Reinsalu said on the same day the AWACS took flight. "Living next door to the Big Bear means that we need a solid defense platform."

It all makes for a markedly changed reality in Europe, where trade and cooperation between East and West seemed the future over the past decade. Now the continent is staring at confrontation.

Witney, of the foreign relations council, said there is little alternative at this stage.

"It is necessary to respond in that sort of way. Otherwise, it is possible that Putin and those around him could misinterpret it as a sort of terminal weakness of the West."



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WORLD

Search for lost jet tests capabilities of China, US

By ERIC TALMADGE
AND CHRISTOPHER BODEEN
The Associated Press

TOKYO — Finding the missing Malaysian jetliner would be a coup for any of the more than two dozen countries out there looking. But for China and the United States, it's a lot more than that — it has been a chance for the two rival powers in the Pacific to show off what they can do in a real-life humanitarian mission across one of the world's most hotly contested regions.

The hunt has major ramifications for Beijing, which has been rapidly improving its military while aggressively challenging neighbors over territorial disputes. Washington is looking to prove it's still the top dog to allies worried about how seriously it takes the threat China poses to the Pacific status quo.

So far, neither country has come up with anything significant. But they have been vigorously waving their flags.

China has the most at stake and has been taking an unusually high-profile role. Almost immediately after Malaysia Airlines Flight 370 disappeared March 8, China dispatched its largest-

ever rescue flotilla to the initial search area in the South China Sea, which Beijing considers its own backyard.

Beijing sent four warships and five coast guard and civilian patrol service vessels, along with helicopters and fixed-wing surveillance aircraft. Among the warships are two of China's largest and most advanced amphibious docking ships. The 20,000-ton vessels are equipped with helicopters and a range of small boats, including up to four hovercrafts.

"On the one hand, China is simply doing its duty in orchestration with other countries," said Ni Lexiong, a military expert at Shanghai's University of Political Science and Law. "On the other hand, this operation offers an opportunity to assess the Chinese navy's willpower, efficiency and ability to carry out operations far from home, especially in comparison with the U.S."

Fresh off a massive relief effort after Typhoon Haiyan devastated the Philippines — which China barely got involved in — the U.S. was once again quick to respond. Within days, the Navy had two destroyers in the South China Sea participating in the search, the

USS Kidd and the USS Pinckney. Both are based in San Diego but were training in the area when the jet disappeared.

Since the flight was bound for Beijing and two-thirds of the passengers are Chinese, the public expects the government and military to pull out all the stops.

National prestige is also a huge factor.

Though the U.S. remains the dominant power in the Pacific, China deeply craves that role. Sizable chunks of its defense spending, which has grown significantly over the past two decades to \$131 billion, have been devoted to boosting its ability to project force for both military and humanitarian missions.

China's Achilles' heel is its relative lack of experience, not having fought in a major conflict since the end of the Korean War in 1953. Its leaders have been trying to compensate with more realistic training scenarios, including joint maritime search-and-rescue exercises with other nations.

"Everyone understands, without anything being said, that the U.S. has unmatched search-and-rescue capabilities that reflect the size and sophistication of its air and naval forces," said Avery



ZHAO YINGQUAN, XINHUA NEWS AGENCY/AP

China's rescue ships conduct a search operation for the missing Malaysia Airlines Boeing 777, Flight 370, on Thursday.

Goldstein, a China security expert at the University of Pennsylvania. "China's capabilities in this regard are improving but not yet in the same league, especially for operations at great distance from the Chinese mainland."

Given new clues from radar and satellite data that the missing Boeing 777 turned west and flew on for several more hours, the search has shifted to a vast swath of land and sea stretching from the southern Indian Ocean up to Kazakhstan. That's an area that neither China nor the U.S. has traditionally put much emphasis on, and has forced both to rethink their strategies.

The U.S. Navy decided that long-range naval aircraft were a more efficient way to search such a vast area, so it will be relying on P-3 and P-8 planes, while the

two destroyers go back to normal duties.

The mission is one of the first on the international stage for the P-8 Poseidon, one of the newest additions to the Navy's air capabilities. The Navy touts the aircraft as the world's most advanced anti-submarine and anti-surface ship reconnaissance plane and says it can cover 15,000 square miles (38,850 square kilometers) in a nine-hour flight.

China, meanwhile, has sent most of its ships involved in the search toward Singapore, where they will split into two groups, one traveling north and the other south. They will be searching two huge blocks of ocean off the coast of Sumatra and near the Andaman Islands.



ANDY WONG/AP

A relative of a Chinese passenger aboard Flight 370 holds a paper that reads "Hunger strike protest, Respect life, Return my relative, Don't want become victim of politics, Tell the truth!" as she speaks to the media Tuesday in Beijing.

26 nations comb Australia-sized zone

The Associated Press

KUALALUMPUR, Malaysia — Investigators trying to solve the mystery of a missing Malaysian jetliner — received some belated help Tuesday from Thailand, whose military said it took 10 days to report radar blips that might have been the plane "because we did not pay attention to it."

A coalition of 26 countries, including Thailand, is looking for Malaysia Airlines Flight 370, which vanished March 8 with 239 people aboard on a night flight from Kuala Lumpur to Beijing. Search crews are scouring two giant arcs of

territory amounting to the size of Australia — half of it in the remote seas of the southern Indian Ocean. Cmdr. William Marks, a spokesman for the U.S. 7th Fleet, said finding the plane was like trying to locate a few people somewhere between New York and California.

Malaysian officials said early in the search that they suspected the plane backtracked and flew toward the Strait of Malacca, just west of Malaysia. But it took a week for them to confirm, Malaysian military radar data that suggested that route. On Tuesday, Thai military officials said their own radar showed an unidentified

plane flying toward the strait beginning minutes after the Malaysian jet's transponder signal was lost.

Air force spokesman Air Vice Marshal Montol Suchookorn said the Thai military doesn't know whether the plane it detected was Flight 370.

Flight 370 took off from Kuala Lumpur at 12:40 a.m. Malaysian time March 8 and its transponder, which allows air traffic controllers to identify and track the airplane, ceased communicating at 1:20 a.m.

Montol said that at 1:28 a.m., Thai military radar "was able to detect a signal, which was not a normal signal, of a plane

flying in the direction opposite from the MH370 plane," back toward Kuala Lumpur. The plane later turned right. The radar signal was infrequent and did not include any data such as the flight number.

When asked why it took so long to release the information, Montol said, "Because we did not pay any attention to it. The Royal Thai Air Force only looks after any threats against our country."

A group of relatives of Chinese passengers in Beijing said they decided Tuesday to begin a hunger strike to express their anger over the handling of the investigation.



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WORLD



HUSSEIN MALLA/AP

Lebanese citizens inspect part of a rocket that hit a house in the predominantly Shiite town of Labweh, near the border with Syria, in northeast Lebanon on Monday. Several rockets struck Labweh not far from the predominantly Sunni town of Aarsal, causing damage to a house but no casualties.

Syrian war's spillover into Lebanon fuels aid concern

By DIAA HADID

The Associated Press

BEIRUT — Gunmen from Lebanon's militant Hezbollah group and local Shiite residents tightened their chokehold on a Sunni town near the Syrian border on Tuesday, sparking concerns the standoff would cut off aid to thousands of Syrian refugees stranded in the area.

The stranglehold on the eastern Lebanese town of Aarsal is the latest spillover of Syria's civil war into its smaller neighbor. The conflict has inflamed sectarian tensions in Lebanon and led to violence in several parts of the tiny Mediterranean country, particularly in its eastern Bekaa Valley.

Over the weekend, gunmen closed off Aarsal's only road to the rest of Lebanon by erecting a

sandbagged checkpoint manned by Hezbollah gunmen and Shites from a string of surrounding towns.

The move came after the area's Shites blamed Aarsal for rocket fire toward their villages in recent days and a car bombing that killed three people.

On Tuesday, Shiite gunmen opened fire at vehicles from Aarsal that tried to drive up toward the checkpoint, said the town's deputy mayor, Ahmad Fliti.

The shooting heightened despair within Aarsal, a town of 40,000 Lebanese and 52,000 Syrian refugees for whom the road is a vital lifeline.

Another 200 Syrian families have arrived in Aarsal over the past few days, fleeing fighting as Syrian troops seized the strategically important rebel stronghold

of Yabroud, a town just across the border from Lebanon, said Lisa Abu Khaled, of the U.N.'s refugee agency.

"Everybody needs help," Fliti said. "They need blankets and food. But we are currently facing a ticking bomb of contagious illnesses, a ticking bomb of hunger and a ticking bomb of people."

Also on Tuesday, a senior State Department official says the Syrian government has been told it must immediately suspend its diplomatic and consular missions in the United States.

The order essentially shuts the Syrian embassy in Washington and its honorary consulates in Troy, Mich., and Houston and forces all personnel who are not legal U.S. residents to leave the country.

Mexicans detain cartel suspect in child kidnappings

By OLGA R. RODRIGUEZ

The Associated Press

MEXICO CITY — Police in Mexico's western state of Michoacan detained an alleged member of the Knights Templar cartel who is suspected of kidnapping children to harvest their organs, an official said Monday.

Michoacan state Public Safety Secretary Carlos Castellanos Becerra alleged that Manuel Plancarte Gaspar was part of the cartel's organ-trafficking ring. The ring would kidnap children and take them to rented homes with medical equipment where their organs were removed, Castellanos Becerra charged.

"We have several statements in open investigations that point to a network of several suspects who would identify people with certain characteristics, especially children, and kidnap them," he said.

Castellanos Becerra said the cases go back several years, but he said he couldn't give any specific details or discuss evidence because the investigation is still open.

Plancarte Gaspar, 34, was detained last week along with another suspect in a stolen car. The men also had some crystal meth, Castellanos Becerra said. He said Plancarte Gaspar is the nephew of Enrique Plancarte Solis, a top Knights Templar leader.

Hours before the announcement, a leader of one of the local

vigilante groups that sprang up last year in Michoacan to challenge the cartel's control told a radio station that people in the area knew the Knights Templar gang was involved in organ trafficking because several children had been rescued in his town while being transported in a refrigerated container inside a van.

"They were inside a refrigerated box, tightly wrapped in blankets," Dr. Jose Manuel Mireles, leader of the civilian "self-defense" group in Tepalcatepec, said in an interview with MVS radio.

Mireles said the van carrying the children was headed to the port city of Lazaro Cardenas and ended up in Tepalcatepec after making a wrong turn.

"They were all children from the same Mexico City school," he said.

He said the children's parents had allowed them to go on an outing to the beach when they were likely kidnapped. He said the children were turned over to their parents who traveled to Tepalcatepec.

Mireles didn't say when the children were rescued and didn't answer his cellphone Monday.

Mexican authorities have said drug trafficking is no longer the top source of income for the Knights Templar, which was once a top producer of crystal meth. The officials say the cartel's main sources of income are illegal mining, illegal logging and extortion.

Attack fears close schools

The Associated Press

MAIDUGURI, Nigeria —

School officials and teachers say Borno state government has ordered the closure of all high schools amid fears of attacks by Islamic extremists.

Some 100,000 students at 85 schools are affected.

The closures point to the military's failure to suppress an Islamic uprising in northeast Nigeria, and may be considered a victory by the Boko Haram terrorist network whose nickname

means "Western education is forbidden."

Officials and teachers spoke on condition of anonymity for fear of being fired.

They said closures were supposed to happen Friday but were delayed by extremists attacking the main army barracks in Maiduguri, the Borno state capital, and freeing dozens of detained fighters.

The latest school attack killed 59 students last month in neighboring Yobe state.

4 Egyptian police convicted of killing Islamist detainees

By SARAH EL DEEB

The Associated Press

CAIRO — An Egyptian court convicted four police officers on Tuesday in the killings last summer of 37 Islamist detainees, most of them supporters of ousted President Mohammed Morsi, and sentenced one of the officers to 10 years in prison.

The three other officers got suspended one-year terms in a

misdeemeanor court. All were convicted on manslaughter and negligence charges.

The lawyer and families of the victims denounced the sentences as too light, arguing that the policemen should have been tried for murder.

The verdict was the outcome in the only trial against officials accused in the killings of supporters of Egypt's ousted president.

The 37 detainees died while

being transported in a prison truck on Aug. 18, reportedly suffocating to death after tear gas was fired into the vehicle. Authorities first said the detainees were trying to escape and attack the guards.

The gruesome incident drew condemnation from rights groups and the international community.

It came just days after Egyptian troops violently broke up two sit-ins in Cairo by Morsi's Muslim

Brotherhood group and other Islamist supporters who had been protesting for weeks against his ouster in July at the hands of the military following mass protests against his rule.

Hundreds died in the raid on the two Cairo protest camps and in violence that engulfed Egypt in the subsequent days.

No charges have been levied in connection with the dispersal.

According to a Cairo court of-

ficial, who spoke on condition of anonymity because he wasn't authorized to talk to media, the officer sentenced to 10 years is a deputy chief of a police station while the others are junior officers.

Mohammed Abdel-Maaboud, one of the 37 surviving detainees who was locked up in the truck for nearly nine hours, dismissed the court ruling as "a farce."

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OPINION

Facebook, NSA have odd uses for data

By CATHERINE RAMPPELL

The Washington Post

Mark Zuckerberg is angry that the National Security Agency is violating Facebook users' privacy, which is a bit like the Silicon Valley equivalent of "Get your government hands off my Medicare." He thinks users should be upset about this, too.

But you know what? I'm not particularly fazed.

Rather than having a turf war over who gets to surveil whom, maybe Facebook and the NSA should team up. The NSA probably already has a rich database of my calls, texts, travels, tonnage clippings and repressed childhood memories; maybe, aided by such additional Big Data, Facebook could finally figure out how to show me ads for things I actually want to buy.

Allegedly the best minds of my generation are thinking about how to make people click on ads (well, that or how to help teenagers swap naked pictures of themselves). But if the ads I'm seeing today represent our best minds' best work with the best Big Data available, color me unimpressed.

The department store pioneer John Wanamaker famously said he knew that half of his advertising budget was wasted but he didn't know which half. Even that dour assessment dramatically overestimates the efficacy of modern advertising. Today, of all online display ads, the share that gets clicked on is not 1 in 2; it's somewhere between 1 in 500 and 1 in 1,000, according to marketing analysts and some of the ad networks themselves.

That's a pretty lousy batting average. Yet

if you consider the number of times you have ever clicked on or even noticed an online ad supposedly curated just for you, these numbers may not be surprising. They certainly didn't astonish me. Facebook, despite being able to track what music I like, where I've vacationed, which Wikipedia rabbit holes I've fallen down and what embarrassing hypochondriacal ailments I've googled (Are those bedbug bites? Do I have mono again and, if so, did my spleen just explode?), has strange beliefs about who I am and what I'd be interested in buying.

For a while last year, I was seeing a lot of ads for Mormon dating services. "Meet local Mormon singles just like you!" Facebook urged, not realizing that I was in a relationship and, perhaps also relevant, not Mormon. Just a few weeks later, I was seeing ads for discount engagement rings. A few weeks after that, Facebook plastered my feeds with ads for diapers and child care services.

Dang, I thought, Facebook thinks I move fast. All that was missing from my dad's sequence were the shells for my father's shotgun.

The ads I've seen since then (on Facebook, Google Display Network sites and other highly algorithmic advertising platforms) exhibit less narrative, alas, but are equally unhelpful.

Online ads served to me usually fall into one of two categories: things that leave me feeling intensely, uncomfortably judged — teeth-whitening, weight-loss or hair-removal products — or things I already own and do not intend to duplicate. For example, the boots I bought on Zappos (but not socks, waterproofing spray or other complementary products I might actu-

ally want), the credit card I use. Broadway shows I've seen, the hotel I just booked.

Likewise, my significant other sees ads from test-prep companies offering to help him gain admission to a university from which he already has a degree. Someday, the ads promise, he might even get accepted to the school where he currently teaches.

Remember, these are the ads curated specifically for our clicking and consumption pleasure by firms that have their pick of the world's greatest talent and where even interns draw salaries of about \$75,000 annualized. So if 1 in 1,000 is the batting average in Silicon Valley, I cannot even imagine what it is at the super-secretive NSA — where the highest-paid workers come from, presumably, collecting infinite reams of private citizens' data — benefits supposedly calibrated to outweigh the costs of intrusion and distrust. (What good is ubiquitous surveillance if, after more than a week, the world still can't find a missing 777?) Maybe tech firms and government agencies need to hover up ever more data about my indecipherable mutterings to my cat. Or maybe they need to start proving they're doing something useful with the invasive data they already have.

Excuse me, then, if I'm skeptical about the greater social welfare benefits that come from secretly collecting infinite reams of private citizens' data — benefits supposedly calibrated to outweigh the costs of intrusion and distrust. (What good is ubiquitous surveillance if, after more than a week, the world still can't find a missing 777?) Maybe tech firms and government agencies need to hover up ever more data about my indecipherable mutterings to my cat. Or maybe they need to start proving they're doing something useful with the invasive data they already have.

Catherine Rampell, a former economics reporter for The New York Times, will write a twice-weekly column for The Washington Post.

Right time for Justice Ginsburg to step down

By ERWIN CHERNISKY

Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg should retire from the Supreme Court after the completion of the current term in June. She turned 81 on Saturday and by all accounts she is healthy and physically and mentally able to continue. But only by resigning this summer can she ensure that a Democratic president will be able to choose a successor who shares her views and values.

A great deal turns on who picks Ginsburg's successor. There are, for example, four likely votes to overturn Roe v. Wade on the current court: Chief Justice John Roberts and Justices Antonin Scalia, Clarence Thomas and Samuel Alito. If a Republican president selects Ginsburg's replacement, that justice easily could be the fifth vote needed to allow the government to prohibit abortions. On many cases — including ones involving environmental law, health care, gay marriage, the death penalty and the rights of those in Guantanamo — the four liberal justices have joined with Justice Anthony Kennedy for a progressive result.

But if a conservative had been occupy-

ing Ginsburg's seat when the court heard these cases, the rulings might well have been very different, and if a conservative takes her seat when she leaves, they might not survive.

There likely will be many calls, publicly and privately, for Ginsburg to resign before President Barack Obama leaves the White House to prevent the risk of a Republican being able to appoint her successor. But simply leaving before the next election isn't enough. If Ginsburg waits until 2016 to announce her retirement, there is a real chance that Republicans would delay the confirmation process to block an outgoing president from being able to fill a vacancy on the Supreme Court. In fact, the process for confirming nominees for judicial vacancies usually largely shuts down the summer before a presidential election.

Moreover, there is a distinct possibility that Democrats will not keep the Senate in the November 2014 elections. The current Senate has 53 Democrats, two independents who vote with the Democrats and 45 Republicans. But in the November 2014 elections, Republicans have a far greater likelihood of gaining seats in the Senate than the Democrats. One recent study identified nine seats held by Democrats that could be won by Republicans, but only two seats occupied by Republicans that might be taken by Democrats.

So long as the Democrats control the Senate, Obama can have virtually anyone he wants confirmed for the Supreme Court. There has been only one filibuster against a Supreme Court nominee, and that was to block Justice Abe Fortas' elevation to chief justice, not to block his initial appointment. There were 45 votes against Thomas and 42 against Alito, but Democrats filibustered neither. Besides, if Democrats have control of the Senate, they could change the rules to eliminate the filibuster for Supreme Court nominees, just as they did for lower federal court judges and presidential appointments to executive positions.

In the end, the only way to ensure that Obama can pick someone who will carry on in Ginsburg's tradition is for the vacancy to occur this summer. Indeed, Justice Stephen Breyer, who will turn 76 this summer, should also carefully consider the possibility of stepping down this year.

Some might question whether a justice should be so calculating in choosing when to retire. But not doing so ignores the reality that ideology matters enormously in Supreme Court decision-making. This is nothing new; ideology always has mattered, and which president fills vacancies on the court can have an impact for decades. If, for example, Al Gore or John Kerry rather than President George W. Bush had replaced William Rehnquist and Sandra Day O'Connor in 2005, a liberal majority would likely have endured on the court for the next few decades. Conversely, if John McCain had replaced David Souter and John Paul Stevens, there would be a solid conservative majority as Roe v. Wade surely would have been overruled already.

I do not minimize how hard it will be for Ginsburg to step down from a job that she loves and has done so well since 1993. But the best way for her to advance all the things she has spent her life working for is to ensure that a Democratic president picks her successor. The way to facilitate that is for her to resign this summer.

Erwin Chernisky is dean of the University of California, Irvine School of Law. This column first appeared in the Los Angeles Times.

OPINION

Cannot let Assad keep aid from his victims

By TRUDY RUBIN

The Philadelphia Inquirer

The Russian invasion of Ukraine should finally end the administration's fantasy that Moscow will help stop the war in Syria.

And it ought to force the White House to forge a new strategy to deal with the most shocking humanitarian crisis of the century, which is spilling over from Syria to all of its neighbors. Otherwise, the level of human suffering will get much, much worse.

U.S. officials have insisted for three years that there was no military solution in Syria; they clung to delusions that Russia would persuade Bashar Assad to make way for a transitional government and free elections. Those hopes reached a dead end at failed Geneva peace talks, where the Russians refused to pressure the Syrian regime.

Just as Vladimir Putin used military force in Ukraine to try to restore an ally to power, the Russian leader has armed and encouraged Assad to retain power at any human cost.

Assad's key weapon is his willingness to commit the most brutal war crimes. That means besieging whole towns, starving residents, targeting civilians with mass bombing of residential areas, and poison gas. His planes have deliberately destroyed schools and hospitals; his militias try to kill doctors in rebel-held areas.

Meanwhile, Assad insists that all humanitarian aid be funneled through the Syrian government. United Nations agencies and many private aid groups are wary of disbelievers who shut down their operations in Damascus. As a result, much of the aid never reaches the neediest civilians.

Assad's goal is to depopulate cities and towns held by rebels and drive their populations into neighboring countries, or displace them within Syria. The regime hopes that strategy will force the opposition to quit, and will pressure Arab neighbors to end support for the rebels. When it comes to war crimes, there are no holds barred.

"This is a war without end, a war without limits, a war without law," said David Miliband, the former British foreign minister who now heads the International Rescue Committee, one of the most active humanitarian agencies helping Syrians in need. "The targeting of civilians has happened before, but the way it is happening here, by barrel bombs (filled with shrapnel and dropped on residential areas), by starvation ... people thought this wouldn't happen again."

Miliband was speaking at a conference on Syrian refugees in Washington, organized by The Aspen Institute, where the angst of the participants was palpable. No wonder. This week the Syrian war is entering its fourth year, and the human toll continues to mount.

Nearly half the Syrian population, at least 9.3 million people, are either refugees abroad or in desperate straits within their own country. Whole cities — such as glorious, historic and ancient Aleppo, have been largely reduced to rubble by regime bombers. More than 130,000 Syrians have died.

A whole generation of children has become victim, as detailed in a poignant report just issued by Save the Children. It estimates that at least 10,000 children have died in the conflict, with millions more bereft of schooling and health care. In what was once a middle-class country, the medical system has collapsed, leading to an increase in the deaths of newborns and a polio epidemic.

But Bashar bombs on, driving at least 2.3 million Syrians (and perhaps twice that many) to quit Syria. This has created dangerous financial and social tensions in neighboring countries, including Iraq, Turkey, Jordan and Lebanon. In the latter, with its population of just over 4 million, at least 1 million Syrian refugees have sought shelter. It's as if the entire population of Germany had washed up on U.S. shores as refugees.

While the United States has taken the lead in Syrian humanitarian aid, with \$1.7 billion, money alone can't address this huge crisis. On Friday, a bipartisan group



BLAIL HUSSEIN/AP

Aid workers measure the upper arm circumference to check for signs of malnutrition in 1-year-old Syrian refugee Mahmoud al-Khatat at a clinic in Kab Elias, Lebanon.

of 19 senators, including Robert Casey, D-Pa., called for President Barack Obama to submit a "new humanitarian strategy." I asked him what he had in mind.

"It's important that there be a more aggressive approach," Casey said, because "there are still problems with aid delivery." That would mean giving teeth to a recent U.N. resolution that calls on Assad to lift sieges of populated areas and allow unhindered aid delivery across borders — without going through Damascus.

Which leads to Casey's second, and key point: "Given the scale of the suffering, you have to change the dynamic on the battlefield ... to arrive at a strategy of getting humanitarian aid delivered and alleviating some of the suffering."

Specifically, Casey suggested it was time to ensure that well-vetted opposition groups get the weapons they need to prevent government bombing and shelling of civilians, and to guarantee that aid reaches the needy. It may be more difficult to do that today — with a more fragmented opposition — than it would have been one or two years ago. But it must be tried.

I agree. Without such aid, Assad will keep bombing Syrian civilians, backed by Moscow and Tehran. He will depopulate much of his country and put an unbearable strain on his Arab neighbors. The administration needs a new humanitarian strategy for Syria before he succeeds.

Trudy Rubin is a columnist and editorial-board member for The Philadelphia Inquirer.

If plan is more land, Crimea was wrong first step

By MARC CHAMPTION

Bloomberg News

There is a grim logic to the shotgun referendum in Crimea that leads toward an expansion of Russia's land grab into eastern and southern Ukraine.

On its own, however, Russia's seizure of Crimea would risk unifying the rest of Ukraine against Russian aggression and fueling a new coalition with the European Union. In gaining Crimea, Russian President Vladimir Putin might lose the bigger prize: turning Ukraine into the real country that in 2008 he told former U.S. President George W. Bush it wasn't. That is something he will want to prevent.

In Crimea, Putin has kept his options open and Western leaders off balance with his otherwise absurd insistence that the Russian troops on the ground are not Russian. Even now, he could conceivably stop short of annexation. He seemed to change his mind as things progressed: The referendum date was changed twice in the space of a week, and giving Crimeans the option of joining Russia was added to the ballot only 10 days before the vote.

Should Putin choose to escalate by moving troops into Ukraine beyond Crimea, even Germany has pledged to hit Russia with painful sanctions. That would damage

The same opinion polls that demonstrate Russians' desire to reclaim Crimea show a clear majority opposed to going to war in Ukraine.

the economy seriously. Former Russian Finance Minister Alexei Kudrin has forecast \$50 billion in capital flight per quarter this year, "in a mild scenario."

And yet, sanctions too can add to the logic of escalation. Serious economic sanctions would, as the most fervent Soviet diehards and Russian nationalists have been hoping ever since the 1990s, create a full break with the West and return Russia's economy to a less extreme version of its Soviet-era isolation — or, in their view, self-sufficiency. Sanctions would also force corrupt businessmen either to reparate their ill-gotten gains or flee the country. The "liberals" who have, according to conservatives, held the country ransom for private gain since the collapse of the Soviet Union and prevented Russia's return to greatness would be routed.

The West would then have done its worst, while proving that it is unwilling to go to war with Russia in order to prevent Putin from sending troops into his non-NATO neighbors. Any future land grab would incur smaller additional costs for Russia.

Such a gathering of Russian lands is a 19th-century fantasy that would condemn Russians to relative penury in the 21st. The damage already inflicted on the country's currency and stock markets, and Russia's 13-to-1 isolation in a United Nations Security Council vote on Crimea (China abstained), demonstrate the threat. And yet Putin appears willing to accept a substantial economic cost.

There are a few markers to watch in gauging Russia's intentions. One of them is military. In addition to large-scale military exercises, Russian helicopters Saturday dropped troops just over Crimea's border with the rest of Ukraine to secure a natural gas facility. That may have doubled as a test of Ukraine's defenses and responsiveness. More exercises and probes of this kind would be one indicator.

A continued expansion of provocations in eastern Ukrainian cities such as Kharkiv, Donetsk, Lugansk and Odessa would be a second. The same opinion polls that demonstrate Russians' desire to reclaim Crimea show a clear majority opposed to going to

war in Ukraine. More dramatic incidents in which Russian speakers in Ukraine are portrayed as in mortal danger would help to make that case.

Within Russia, a sustained campaign of propaganda referring back to World War II — known to Russians as the Great Patriotic War — would also be a sign. What in Ukraine and the Baltic states are understood as liberation struggles are to many Russians offensive, because they put in question the narrative in which the Soviet armies liberated these countries from Nazi Germany. This drip feed of hate has already begun on Russia's tightly controlled television channels.

None of this proves that Putin has made up his mind whether to invade eastern Ukraine, or even that he will formally annex Crimea. He may also be using fear of invasion to force the authorities in Kiev, and their U.S. and European backers, to cave to Russian demands. Yet as with Crimea, amid the uncertainties, events are creating their own momentum.

"We would want to be sure we are welcomed with flowers" before annexing any territory in eastern Ukraine, Kremlin analyst Sergei Markov told Bloomberg News on Saturday. Arrangements already appear to be being made.

Marc Chamption is a Bloomberg View editorial board member.

NATION

The value of risk

Some say playgrounds have become so safe that they are hurting children

By RACHEL WEAVER
Pittsburgh Tribune-Review

As slow rides, low slides and lots of padding have become the norm at playgrounds around the country, some say the swing to overly safe environments is actually hurting children.

"A playground must offer challenges to all ages, from 2 to 12," said Gabriela Burkhalter, curator of "The Playground Project," part of the 2013 Carnegie International. The exhibit presents some of the most influential playgrounds from around the world.

The transition from playgrounds with towering metal monkey bars to those completely covered in padding started in the 1970s, said Susan Solomon, historian and author of "American Playgrounds: Revitalizing Community Space." Increased concern about liability contributed to the change, as did parent anxiety.

"Sometimes you see more parents on the equipment than the kids," Solomon said.

Those environments discourage creative play, which can help children develop important skills, Solomon said.

"Current playgrounds are largely directional and the outcomes are clear," said Solomon. "The kid

goes up, the kid goes down, the kid goes across, then does it all over again. Nothing gets altered."

Instead, playgrounds should provide "appropriate risk" to help children assess, confront and learn from unpredictable situations, she said.

"We're not talking about kids jumping from buildings," Solomon said. "It's important to define the risk as manageable, not scary."

Examples include bucket swings, which can fit several riders and travel quickly, she said. Another is sand. At one time a staple of most playgrounds, it has largely disappeared from contemporary spaces.

"If you use the right sand and commit to a certain amount of maintenance, it can be a better surface to fall on and something to do that's never the same," she said.

Solomon describes a park near her home as an example of a playground with appropriate risk. It's surrounded by boulders, recycled from a construction site. She once watched as a 2-year-old child realized she couldn't get down from the boulders while carrying her pail and shovel. She tossed her toys down into the sand, then lowered herself in after.

"She made an assessment, realized the danger and came up with a solution," Solomon said.

Research shows that even with increased safety, playgrounds can still result in injuries. According to the Centers for Disease Control, U.S. emergency departments treat more than 200,000 children ages 14 and younger for playground-related injuries a year. About 45 percent are fractures — fractures, internal injuries, concussions, disloca-

tions and amputations.

But taking overly extreme precautions can devalue any play experience a child might have, Burkhalter said.

"Everything is shrunk to small size so that there is no danger, but also not much imagination possible," she said. "Children are under constant control because parents don't let them play alone even on supersafe playgrounds. Fear is omnipresent, and there is no mental space to let things happen, and children don't have to assume responsibility."

The lack of those risks has decreased the value of playgrounds as public gathering spaces, Burkhalter said.

"Parents would go there with their small children, but older children don't go there anymore," she said. "Playgrounds function as a gathering place for parents with young children."

Although older children gather on fields for soccer or baseball, places for the in-betweens are lacking, she said. "So there are strong incentives to stay home and play on electronic devices."

Designing parks that are ideal for individual communities takes collaboration between residents, government and design professionals, said Wendy Nilsson, executive director of Partnership for Providence Parks. Her group serves as a resource for communities interested in creating and maintaining public parks.

"The best parks are those that have a resident contingency who can serve as the eyes and the ears of the park," she said.

Collaboration also results in parks that are more than just cookie-cutter designs, she said.

"It's not about a department putting in a piece of equipment," Nilsson said. "What you want is a space that feels like it reflects the identity of your community."

‘Everything is shrunk to a small size so that there is no danger, but also not much imagination possible.’

Gabriela Burkhalter
curator of
"The Playground Project"



ILLUSTRATION BY BEV SCHILLING/Stars and Stripes

WIRED WORLD



Making an impact

PHOTOS BY TRAVIS HEYING, THE WICHITA (KAN.) EAGLE/AP

Brian Brown, associate director of CAD/CAM Laboratory at the National Institute for Aviation Research in Wichita, Kan., holds a product that was made using a 3-D printer.

3-D printing's future to affect jobs, economy

By ROY WENZL

The Wichita (Kan.) Eagle

WICHITA, Kan. — If you think life changed after the Internet emerged, wait until you see what's coming next.

Tech people say three-dimensional printing will create the next wave of joys and frustrations, job creation and job loss.

In five to 10 years, 3-D printers will be all around us, they predict. The printers will make food, including customized wedding cakes. They will make shoes, clothes, aircraft parts, dresses, steaks, replacement bones and eventually even replacement kidneys. If you find that bit about the kidney hard to believe, Google a company called Organovo.

The printers might make outsourcing jobs to China, India and Mexico less necessary. Few Americans will mourn.

But 3-D printers also would diminish the number of jobs here and everywhere.

John Tomblin remembers several years ago employees telling him how good 3-D printers are.

First you scan any object in three dimensions, as a hospital MRI scanner would. Or you upload any 3-D design, no matter how complex. Then hit a button.

Instead of paper, these printers are loaded with other materials, usually thin lines of plastic wrapped around a spool like fishing line. The printer shoots thin strands of heated plastic out of a tiny nozzle, creating layer after layer with microscopic accuracy until every detail of the object is reproduced.

Tomblin directs the National Institute for Aviation Research in Wichita, which tests new technology. He was used to seeing fun, new things. But the 3-D printer idea had him scoffing, a little.

So they borrowed his keys. And gave him exact copies. At first, he thought that was "really cool."

Then he realized how easy it was now to copy the keys to his house.

Organovo, the biotech company experimenting with ways to print human organs, plans to harvest a patient's own cells and culture them so they multiply. The cells would then be fed into the printer, which would print tissue strips that could be used to patch a patient's failing organs and eventually, the company hopes, create new organs.

The work Organovo is doing in replicating organs means "maybe we could live forever," said Ravi Pendse, a national expert on technology, now at Brown University.

He said food makers already can make fantastically customized cakes, or other food, in artistic ways never before possible.

The 3-D cake makers, instead of extruding hard plastic, shoot out sugar instead. Or chocolate. Or vanilla-laced icing or cake dough.

A 3-D countertop printer for home kitchens is expected to go on sale by the end of the year for making cake toppers and confections. The price? About \$5,000.

Three-dimensional printing will bring back custom-made goods, and that's great, Pendse said. We lost much of the joys of

custom-made goods when Henry Ford started making standardized parts as a cheap, fast way to produce goods.

"Now all that will come back, for our cars, our clothes, everything," Pendse said.

Those are upsides. Three-D also will challenge us, he said. At stake: our jobs, our economy, perhaps our morals and ethics, he said.

"We all need very soon to figure out how to use 3-D," said Pendse, who served as a vice president for information technology at Wichita State University until last year.

"These tools are raising serious moral and ethical questions. And not just in medicine, where they will make livers and kidneys.

"There needs to be a place for humanists, for philosophers and liberal arts people, to be at the table to help us have these conversations," Pendse said. "We should not leave these tools solely in the hands of engineers like me who think only, Wow, that's really cool."

And there's another worry: disappearing jobs.

"That's a real worry with 3-D, he said. Rapid PSI is a longtime Wichita company that makes aviation parts.

In 2008, Rapid PSI had between 15 and 20 employees, said vice president Jeremy Weinman. The recession that year forced them to drop down to five.

In 2009, they filled their building with a number of truck-sized 3-D printers.

One year later, Weinman said, sales increased by 50 percent.



Chris Rempe, manager of reverse engineering and rapid prototyping, removes a product from a 3-D printer recently at the National Institute for Aviation Research.

One economic upside, Weinman said, is that 3-D will make it more attractive for aviation and other factories to keep more production work in Wichita, rather than giving it to China or Mexico.

"We're certainly trying to make that case here," Weinman said.

But there's a downside. Three-D parts come out perfect — they don't require the sanding, tooling and scraping that manufacturing once required.

So Rapid PSI still has only five people — even though it has more than doubled sales.

Multiply that across the world economy, Pendse said.

Consider the shoe industry. Three-D printers can't yet create a good shoe. Most 3-D printers can print really detailed objects, but use only one material at a time. A shoe might have rubber soles, leather or canvas uppers and metal grommets for laces. A printer can make the sole and the uppers and the grommets, but it

can't put them together.

But the technology for all this is improving rapidly, Pendse said. Whole shoes are not far away.

And then, you could place an order so detailed that you can actually customize and pick your own shoe color, shape and size. And the shoe company, instead of running a factory in China and shipping shoes across the Pacific, can now just take your order online and touch a button. And a new 3-D print shop two blocks from your home then prints your shoe. You come pick it up.

Good, right? Made in America. No Chinese factory taking what used to be American jobs. And for you: a savings.

But 3-D printers will eliminate not only some entire factories but some shipping needs.

"It will democratize manufacturing the way Amazon democratized bookstores," Pendse said. "A lot of bookstores disappeared."

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Man Googles himself, finds he's wanted

CA SAN LEANDRO — A Northern California man was "egosurfing" Google when a search of his name yielded a startling result: He was wanted by police.

Christopher Viatafa turned himself into San Leandro police after discovering he was on the department's most-wanted list after a Google search of his name turned up his mug shot.

He was being sought for an August shooting during a private party at a senior center in San Leandro, about 15 miles east of San Francisco. Investigators say he fired several shots from a handgun into the ground after getting into an argument.

No one was injured, but police sought Viatafa on suspicion of shooting into an inhabited dwelling.

He was listed Saturday on the police website as captured.

Man falls asleep frying fish; house catches fire

LA BAKER — A Baker family has been displaced from their home after a man fell asleep while frying fish and the oil caught fire, burning most of the kitchen before spreading to the attic.

Firefighters responded about 9 p.m. Saturday and quickly controlled the fire before it spread to the rest of the home.

Baker Fire Department spokesman Howard Ward said no one was injured and the Red Cross responded to help the displaced family.

Ward said the fire caused about \$10,000 in damage, and the utilities had to be disconnected from the home.

Court backs eatery in hot gravy dispute

OK OKLAHOMA CITY — An Oklahoma appeals court has ruled a mother is not entitled to recover any damages after her 7-year-old daughter spilled hot gravy on her leg after buying a meal from a fast food restaurant's drive-thru window.

The Oklahoma Court of Civil Appeals ruled Monday in favor of the defendant, Whataburger, and upheld a lower court's ruling.

The child's mother sued the restaurant after she ordered a meal that included a Styrofoam bowl of heated gravy that spilled on her daughter's leg, resulting in second-degree burns.

The court determined the gravy was not unreasonably hot and that the family had eaten the same meal many times and should have "known or expected the gravy to burn if spilled."

Ex-lunch aide gets jail in student beating case

MI GRAND RAPIDS — An ex-lunchroom aide who authorities say paid students to beat up a fourth-grader has been sentenced to seven days in jail and a year of probation.

Brooke Wilson-Johnson, 19,

THE CENSUS

199

The top speed in miles per hour of the 2014 model of a **Lamborghini** like the one the Los Angeles Police Department is getting. But don't expect to see the exotic Italian sports car pursuing fugitive drivers down the city's freeways. Officer Sally Madera said the car is privately owned and will be loaned to police for "charity events and recruitment."



SCOTT MASON, THE WINCHESTER (VA.) STAR/AP

Not yet all wet

Emmett Mailberger, 13, left, and Logan Chaillet, 10, paddle their cardboard boat across a pool Saturday in Jim Barnett Park in Winchester, Va., while taking part in the Cardboard Boat Regatta. The boys won a prize for making the boat that stayed afloat for the longest time.

was taken to jail Monday following a hearing in Grand Rapids. She earlier pleaded guilty to a misdemeanor of aiding and abetting delinquent acts.

Police have said two 9-year-old boys and a 10-year-old girl at Campus Elementary in Grand Rapids said they were given \$1 each last fall to beat up the fourth-grader. Wilson-Johnson had denied the allegation, but said the 9-year-old victim swore at her.

Tamale stand that used deer meat reopens

AR SEARCY — A roadside tamale stand that had been shut down for illegally using deer meat is back open after passing an Arkansas health department inspection.

Tamale stand owner Fred Atkins said he didn't realize he was breaking the law when he prepared venison tamales as requested by customers.

"I have customers now that don't even care what happened with all of this," Atkins said. "But I didn't know that I was in the wrong at the time and I never hid anything."

Atkins said his roadside stand along Arkansas 16 near Pangburn passed inspection and he's back to selling tamales. However,

he and his wife, Betty Atkins, face misdemeanor charges of buying, selling or trading wildlife and are due in court April 8.

Man rescued from car in frigid Yakima River

WA WAPATO — Yakima County emergency responders rescued a man from a car that landed in the Yakima River on Sunday evening at Wapato.

A witness saw one man make it to shore, but another man was apparently trapped in the car as it filled with frigid water.

The sheriff's swiftwater rescue boat arrived in time to pull him to safety. He was taken to a hospital to be treated for hypothermia and possible injuries from the accident.

Lawyer pleads guilty to bribing judge

TX SAN ANTONIO — A San Antonio lawyer has pleaded guilty to bribing a state district judge in exchange for favorable rulings.

Alberto Acevedo Jr. appeared in court Monday and has admitted he was caught in an FBI investigation into suspected corruption

at the Bexar County courthouse.

Federal prosecutors say in a court filing that Acevedo last year bribed Judge Angus McGinty, who resigned in February. They say Acevedo gave gifts and payments totaling more than \$6,600 to McGinty to secure rulings favoring Acevedo's clients. Acevedo also promised to take care of car repairs the judge needed.

McGinty has not been charged with a crime.

Acevedo is scheduled to be sentenced in June and faces a maximum 10-year sentence and a \$250,000 fine.

Giant Easter eggs aim of smartphone hunt

NY NEW YORK — New York City is getting ready for an old-fashioned Easter egg hunt with a 21st-century twist: The public will hunt for the eggs as part of an interactive contest using a smartphone app.

Nearly 275 egg sculptures will be hidden around the city April 1-17 as part of The Faberge Big Egg Hunt. The eggs are about 2½ feet tall and were created by famous artists and designers like Tommy Hilfinger and Jeff Koons.

A free, downloadable smartphone application will allow the public to check in each time an

egg is found. The eggs' locations will remain secret until 10 people use the app to check in at an egg. At that point its location will appear on an interactive map, becoming public. Participants will be eligible for prizes.

Helicopter plucks stranded dog from cliff

CA SANTA ROSA — A rescue worker dangling from a helicopter plucked a stranded dog from a Northern California seaside cliff.

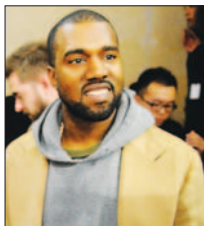
Authorities reported Sunday that a black Labrador named Oreo somehow made it halfway down a 90-foot cliff along the Pacific coast in Sonoma County and couldn't get back up. The surf was pounding below, so a descent was not an option.

After the scared dog refused entreaties to climb back up, the decision was made to dangle a Sonoma County Sheriff's Department deputy about 100 feet below the helicopter. The deputy was able to attach a rope to a harness the dog was wearing and pulled it to safety.

A large crowd of beachgoers who gathered to watch the rescue broke into applause.

From wire reports

FACES



ZACHARIE SCHEUREN/AP

Kanye West was sentenced to probation, anger-management therapy and community service after pleading no contest to misdemeanor battery against a photographer in Los Angeles.

West pleads no contest in battery case

The Associated Press

Kanye West pleaded no contest to misdemeanor battery against a photographer at Los Angeles International Airport in a special plea in which he maintains his innocence.

West entered the plea Monday through his attorney and did not attend the court hearing. He was sentenced to two years of probation, 24 anger-management therapy sessions and 250 hours of community service.

The rapper did not reach a civil settlement with the paparazzo, and his plea cannot be used against him in a civil lawsuit.

West was charged with misdemeanor counts of battery and grand theft after an altercation at LAX with photographer Daniel Ramos in July.

Ramos claimed West punched him in an unprovoked attack and wrestled his camera to the ground during the scuffle.

Ramos told the court that West should be in jail. He said he was still taking medication for the injuries he suffered.

"If I did what he did to me, I'd be behind bars," he said. "I was doing my job and he broke the law."

Ramos is suing West and attended Monday's hearing accompanied by his lawyer, Gloria Allred.

B-52s' singer: Don't eat the lobster

One of the founders of the quirky rock band The B-52s is using the 35th anniversary of its hit "Rock Lobster" to reiterate his opposition to eating them.

Fred Schneider says he stopped eating crustaceans at age 4 after going crabbing with family in New Jersey and watching them boiled alive. The lifelong vegetarian said in a video narrated for People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals that he views crabs and lobsters not as seafood but as "sea life."

From The Associated Press

'Bad day' costs Brown his freedom

By ANTHONY MCCARTNEY
The Associated Press

With a roll of his eyes and a comment that he was good at using guns and knives, Chris Brown might have cost himself weeks of freedom and his chance to get back to making music anytime soon.

The reasons for Brown's dismissal from a Malibu, Calif., rehab facility were detailed in Los Angeles Superior Court on Monday, with a judge ordering the Grammy winner to remain in jail until a formal probation violation hearing can be convened on April 23.

The jail stint will be Brown's longest and comes more than five years after he viciously attacked his then-girlfriend Rihanna in a rented sports car just hours before the Grammy Awards. Superior Court Judge James R. Brandlin said he was most troubled by a comment the singer made during a group therapy session last week.

"I am good at using guns and knives," the rehab facility reported Brown said in response to an exercise asking him to reflect on what he was good or excelled at.

Other transgressions cited by rehab workers included the singer ignoring a worker who was waiting to give him a drug test, rubbing elbows with a woman after signing an agreement to stay at least two feet away from female clients and jokingly telling fellow patients, "I'm going to ask my higher power to take away my troubles." When asked whether he was serious, Brown said yes while shaking his head no, a report on Brown's conduct stated.

Outside court, Brown's attorney described the singer as having had a bad day at the facility and said he didn't think his client should be forced to stay behind bars for another month.



LUCY NICHOLSON, POOL/AP

R&B singer Chris Brown appears in Los Angeles Superior Court on Monday. Brown will spend another month in jail after a judge said Monday he was told the singer made troubling comments in rehab about being good at using guns and knives.

"You know — do you have a bad day? I have bad days sometimes," attorney Mark Geragos said outside the courthouse. "Do you say things you'd like to take back? I certainly do. So I don't know that being in a therapeutic session and you're talking about your reflections and you say one sentence means you go to jail? Seems to me to be counterproductive to therapy."

Geragos said he planned to petition to have Brown released before the April hearing. The singer has legal woes on the East Coast as well and is due to go on trial in a misdemeanor assault case in Washington, D.C., on April 17.

Geragos said Brown's incarceration might make it impossible for that trial to start on time, and would be a waste of judicial and jail resources.

Fashion designer Scott found dead in apartment

The Associated Press

L'Wren Scott, who left her small-town Utah home as a teenager to become a model in Paris, then a top Hollywood stylist and finally a high-end fashion designer best known as the longtime girlfriend of Mick Jagger, has died in what was being investigated as an apparent suicide.

Scott was found dead in her Manhattan apartment at 10 a.m. Monday; no note was found and there was no sign of foul play, police said. The designer had texted her assistant 90 minutes earlier and asked her to come to her apartment but didn't say why. She was found kneeling with a scarf wrapped around her neck that had been tied to the handle of a French door, police said.

Her spokesperson requested privacy for her family and friends. Just last month, Scott, who was believed to be 49 but had not disclosed her precise age, canceled her London Fashion Week show, due to reported production delays.

Jagger's representative said the singer was "completely shocked and devastated by the news" of her death.

Scott, whose elegant designs in lush fabrics were favored by celebrities like Madonna, Nicole Kidman, Oprah Winfrey, Penelope Cruz and first lady Michelle Obama, was a fixture on Jagger's arm since she met the Rolling Stones frontman in 2001. On red



AP

Designer L'Wren Scott, left, with longtime boyfriend Mick Jagger in 2012. Scott was found dead Monday of a possible suicide.

carpets, the striking 6-foot-3 designer towered over her famous 5-10 boyfriend.

Also:

■ Scott Ashton, drummer for the influential proto-punk band the Stooges, has died. He was 64. His daughter, Leanna Ashton, confirmed Monday that her father died Saturday of a heart attack.

■ Tony Award-winning Broadway composer Mitch Leigh has died at 86. Leigh's assistant, Lisa Maldonado, said the writer of the music for the celebrated hit "Man

of La Mancha" died Sunday in New York of pneumonia and complications from a stroke.

3rd person dies from SXSW crash

A third person struck by a suspected drunken driver in Austin, Texas, during the South By Southwest festival died Monday, police and family said.

Sandy Thuy Le, 26, died from the injuries she sustained when she was run over outside The Mohawk music club early Thursday, Austin police spokeswoman Venezia Bremner said.

Police say the driver, Rashad Owens, was fleeing police when he crashed through a barricade and accelerated his car into a crowd in Austin's Red River Entertainment District, killing two people and injuring 21 others.

Owens, 21, has been charged with capital murder and aggravated assault with a motor vehicle.

'Today' host Guthrie married, expecting

"Today" anchor Savannah Guthrie has gotten married, and she used the occasion to announce she's expecting her first child. Guthrie, 42, and Mike Feldman, a 45-year-old communications strategist, tied the knot Saturday near her hometown of Tucson,

Ariz. It was there she told her guests she's four months pregnant. The marriage-and-baby twofor was revealed to the rest of the world on Monday's edition of "Today," with Guthrie back in New York at the NBC morning show.

■ In other baby news:

■ It's a boy for actor Josh Holloway, who says "everything's calmer" with his second baby. Holloway, 44, said in an interview that he and his wife, Yessica Kumala, welcomed Hunter Lee Holloway earlier this year. Holloway and Kumala have a 4-year-old daughter, Javi. The former "Lost" actor currently stars in the CBS series "Intelligence."

'Bling Ring' defendant arrested again

A man who pleaded no contest to stealing from Lindsay Lohan and reality star Audrina Patridge has been arrested on suspicion of having a gun — a violation of his parole.

City News Service reported Monday that Nicholas Prugo, 23, was taken into custody last week in Los Angeles.

Prugo pleaded no contest in March 2012 in the "Bling Ring" burglaries case that authorities say targeted celebrities' homes. He was sentenced to time served in jail in exchange for his testimony against other defendants.

Wal-Mart to accept used video games

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MLB

Dodgers, Diamondbacks arrive Down Under

Teams getting set to begin 2014 Major League season with two-game series in Australia

BY DENNIS PASSA
The Associated Press

SYDNEY — Adrian Gonzalez ripped line drives to all areas of the park, often scattering his Los Angeles Dodgers teammates in the outfield from the safety of the batting cage. It was just a few hours after arriving in Australia, with his body thinking it was about midnight.

Still, the first baseman who led the Dodgers in hits, home runs, RBIs and games played last season did a good job of making Sydney Cricket Ground, the home for two Major League Baseball season-opening games this weekend, sound and look like a real ballpark.

The Dodgers and their weekend opponents, the Arizona Diamondbacks, arrived early Tuesday on separate jumbos from the U.S. west coast.

It was a 15-hour flight and took the teams across the International Date Line, missing Monday altogether, and putting them in a time zone 18 hours ahead of the one they left behind.

Hence Gonzalez in the batting cage was well past his usual bedtime, but looking very impressive.

"We're all very excited to be here," Gonzalez said before a workout. "We'll have a few hits, see how the ball carries, but it all looks like a real ball park."

Vin Scully, the 86-year-old Dodgers' announcer, proclaimed after he got off the plane that "it's great to be here," and Dodgers manager Don Mattingly and his Diamondbacks counterpart Kirk Gibson later gave the ball field a similar thumbs-up.

"No question, everyone is saying that having a chance to start the season here in Sydney, to be able to get out of spring training a bit early, it's great," said Mattingly. "Let's get this thing started."

Gibson said he had fond memories of Australia because he spent his honeymoon here in 1985 "and that part worked out pretty good, so I hope this does."

"Of all the historic places we've played over the years, you walk in and you can see they've put a lot of



RICK RYCGROFT/AF

The Los Angeles Dodgers' Juan Uribe fields a ball as his team trains at the Sydney Cricket Ground in Sydney on Tuesday in preparation for their two-game series with the Arizona Diamondbacks this weekend. The series officially opens Major League Baseball's regular season.

‘Of all the historic places we’ve played over the years, you walk in and you can see they’ve put a lot of work into the field. And I’ve been told by (Diamondbacks Australian relief pitcher) Ryan Rowland-Smith, it’s fair dinkum.’

Kirk Gibson
Diamondbacks
manager

work into the field," Gibson added. "And I've been told by (Diamondbacks Australian relief pitcher) Ryan Rowland-Smith, it's fair dinkum."

Translated, that means it's a pretty good place to play baseball. Arizona first baseman Paul

Goldschmidt was in the best position to judge the change to Sydney Cricket Ground, having been part of a promotional visit here last year.

"When I was here it was set up for cricket matches, but you wouldn't know that walking

out there today," he said. "Very impressed."

Goldschmidt was surprised by the distance in foul territory between the baselines and the stands. That's in keeping with the natural shape of a cricket ground, where the batting "wicket" is usually closer to the center of the ground and the entire field is in play.

"Foul territory, that's going to be the big difference," Goldschmidt said. "But baseball stadiums are different in the States, so it'll just take some adjusting. We'll work it out in the next few days."

The teams will only have one workout Wednesday before taking on Team Australia in a pair of exhibition games — the Diamondbacks on Thursday and the Dodgers on Friday.

Clayton Kershaw, who spent time Tuesday stretching in the outfield bullpen, will start for the Dodgers in Saturday's season opener. Left-hander Wade Miley replaces Patrick Corbin, who has



**Los Angeles Dodgers
vs. Arizona Diamondbacks**
AFN-Atlantic
Game 1: 5 p.m. Saturday CET
(delayed)
1 a.m. Sunday JKT (delayed)
AFN-Sports
Game 2: 1 a.m. Sunday CET
11 a.m. Sunday JKT

a left elbow injury, as the Diamondbacks starter.

Gibson said Tuesday the Diamondbacks were still waiting for a second opinion on the severity of Corbin's injury, which could require surgery and put him out for the season.

The teams will close out the two-game series Sunday when the Dodgers' Hyun-Jin Ryu will start against Arizona's Trevor Cahill.

The series marks the first regular-season games in Australia. Previous MLB season openers were held in Monterrey, Mexico (1999), San Juan, Puerto Rico (2001) and four times in Tokyo, most recently in 2012.

The weekend games will mark the 100th anniversary of an exhibition game played by the Chicago White Sox and the New York Giants at the same stadium.

Capacity crowds of about 40,000 are expected for both games at the historic ground where Australia's cricket teams have played memorable matches for the past century and a half. In keeping with the theme, Goldschmidt and Gonzalez were presented with cricket bats signed by Australia cricket captain Michael Clarke.

The two first basemen were asked to pose with the bats and a few in the crowd chuckled when Gonzalez initially slung it over his shoulder in a very un-cricket like pose. But he quickly adopted an impressive Clarke-like stance for the cameras.

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NHL

Roundup

Bruins roll to ninth in a row

Iginla sparks Boston's victory over Minnesota with 2 goals

The Associated Press

BOSTON — Jarome Iginla's slow start in Boston is now a distant memory.

Iginla scored two goals, Tuukka Rask stopped 33 shots, and the Eastern Conference-leading Bruins extended their winning streak to nine games with a 4-1 win over the Minnesota Wild on Monday.

Signed during the offseason to replace departed free agent Nathan Horton on the Bruins' top line, Iginla has fit in perfectly.

"We lose a guy that we thought would be back for us, in Horton. That was a big hole to fill," Bruins coach Claude Julien said. "He's come in and filled that hole really well. You mention the stats, he brings us the same thing the other guy did with his size and scoring ability. He's done a great job."

"We're talking about a veteran here with tremendous leadership qualities. He's certainly been a great asset to our team."

Iginla's scoring didn't come for a while with Boston. He didn't net his first goal until his ninth game, and had just five in his first 29.

But now he is scoring goals even when his shots are blocked.

The Bruins took a 1-0 lead 3:52 into the second period on Iginla's first of the game. His shot was deflected by defenseman Jonas Brodin and it popped into the air.

Wild goalie Darcy Kuemper appeared to lose sight of the puck and it bounced between his pads just before he dropped.

Iginla was smiling along the boards when his teammates came to congratulate him. Iginla added an empty-netter with 1:05 left.

"It was a very lucky, fortunate bounce goal. I'll definitely take them," he said, flashing a smile standing in front of his locker.

The Bruins increased their conference lead to five points over idle second-place Pittsburgh by posting their longest winning streak since a 10-game run in November 2011. Boston is 12-2-1 in its past 15 games.

Loui Eriksson and Reilly Smith also scored for Boston, which beat the Wild at home for the first time after losing the first six meetings. The Bruins are 3-10 overall against the Wild, who began play in the 2000-01 season.

Jason Pominville had the only goal for the Wild, which lost for the fifth time in six games, but three of those defeats came in shootouts.



CHARLES KRUPA/AP

Minnesota Wild center Charlie Coyle (3) looks to pass as he skates by Boston Bruins center David Krejci (46) during the first period of Boston's 4-1 victory on Monday at TD Garden in Boston.

President's Trophy race

	W	L	OT	Pts	Gms	Left
St. Louis	47	14	7	101	14	
Boston	46	17	5	97	14	
Anaheim	45	16	7	97	14	
San Jose	45	17	7	97	14	
Colorado	44	19	5	93	14	
Pittsburgh	44	19	4	92	15	
Chicago	39	15	14	92	14	

SOURCE: The Associated Press

Kuemper made 25 saves.

About 2½ minutes after Iginla's first goal, Rask robbed Mikko Koivu with a glove stop on a shot from in front. Rask also made a right-pad save on Nino Niederreiter's shot from the left circle with just over 2½ minutes remaining.

"He was very good. We knew that going into the game, and he was as good as people say he is," Koivu said.

Boston made it 2-0 at 11:55 when Carl Soderberg circled the net and sent a backhanded pass across the crease and through a group of players to Eriksson, who one-timed it into the net.

Pominville cut it to 2-1 with 1:26 left in the second. He broke the blade of his stick as the puck flew toward Rask as it sailed by his glove inside the net post.

Smith crossed off the rebound of Patrice Bergeron's shot, making it 3-1 at 7:50 of the third.

Blues 3, Jets 1: David Backes scored twice, and Ryan Miller made 16 saves in another win as host St. Louis beat Winnipeg.

The Blues are 7-0-1 since Miller was acquired by trade from Buffalo. St. Louis has won three straight and eight of nine.

Western Conference-leading St. Louis has an NHL-best 101 points. It is the sixth time in franchise history that the Blues have reached 100 points.

Backes has 23 goals this season. Brendan Morrow added a goal and Jay Bouwmeester had two assists in the Blues' win.

Coyotes 4, Kings 3: Keith Yandle scored the tying goal midway through the third period and Jeff Halpern netted the winner with 3:05 left, leading visiting Phoenix over Los Angeles.

Rob Klinkhammer and Mikkel Boedker scored 63 seconds apart in the first period for the Coyotes, who handed the Kings their third straight loss and took over sole possession of eighth place in the Western Conference. Mike Smith made 36 saves for Phoenix.

Lightning 4, Canucks 3: Steven Stamkos and Ondrej Palat both had a goal and an assist to lead host Tampa Bay by Vancouver.

Valtteri Filppula and Tom Pyatt also scored for the Lightning, who moved into a second-place tie with Montreal in the Atlantic Division. Ben Bishop extended his team record with his 32nd win this year.

Scoreboard

Eastern Conference

Atlantic Division	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
Boston	68	41	15	5	87	219	147
Tampa Bay	68	37	24	7	81	198	178
Montreal	69	37	25	7	81	174	174
Toronto	69	36	25	8	80	203	211
Ottawa	68	37	25	6	80	195	184
Florida	68	26	28	13	69	190	221
Philadelphia	68	25	35	8	58	169	221
Buffalo	67	24	36	4	48	132	202

Metropolitan Division	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
Pittsburgh	67	44	15	4	92	209	167
Philadelphia	67	35	25	7	77	192	193
Columbus	67	32	26	9	76	195	184
N.Y. Rangers	68	33	29	4	70	177	170
Washington	68	32	27	10	74	201	207
New Jersey	68	29	28	13	71	166	176
Carolina	68	29	30	9	67	169	194
N.Y. Islanders	69	26	34	9	61	155	193

Western Conference

Central Division	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
St. Louis	68	47	14	7	101	226	152
Chicago	68	41	15	5	92	209	147
Chicago	68	39	15	14	92	231	179
Minnesota	68	39	15	10	80	168	168
Dallas	67	32	24	11	75	193	192
Winnipeg	70	31	30	9	71	184	204
Nashville	68	29	30	8	68	164	201

Pacific Division	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
Anaheim	69	45	17	7	97	214	165
San Jose	69	38	24	7	82	188	148
Los Angeles	69	33	25	11	77	192	196
Phoenix	71	31	30	10	72	170	194
Vancouver	69	27	31	6	61	165	202
Edmonton	69	24	36	9	57	171	224

Note: Two points for a win, one point for overtime loss.

Sunday's games
Vancouver 4, Florida 3, SGO Philadelphia 4, Pittsburgh 3
Washington 4, Toronto 2
Edmonton 2, Carolina 1

Monday's games
Tampa Bay 4, Vancouver 3
St. Louis 3, Winnipeg 1
Phoenix 4, N.Y. Rangers 0

Tuesday's games
Boston at New Jersey
Minnesota at N.Y. Islanders
Dallas at Pittsburgh
Colorado at Columbus

Wednesday's games
Colorado at Montreal
N.Y. Rangers at Ottawa
Chicago at Detroit
Buffalo at Calgary

Thursday's games
Nashville at Edmonton
Washington at Anaheim
Florida at San Jose
Tampa Bay at Toronto

Friday's games
St. Louis at Chicago
Colorado at Winnipeg
Nashville at Vancouver

Monday

Bruins 4, Wild 1	Minnesota	0	1	0-1
	68	34	29	67

Second Period—1, Boston, Iginla 24 (Barikowski, Meszaros), 3:52. 2, Boston, Eriksson (Soderberg), 11:55. 3, Minnesota, Pominville 26 (Suter, Granlund), 18:34.

Third Period—4, Boston, Smith 19 (Bergeron, Chara), 7:50. 5, Boston, Iginla 25 (Chabot), 10:55. 6, Minnesota, 10-16—34.

Shots on Goal—Minnesota 10-16—34. 30-Boston 0-1-10—20. 0 of 1: Boston 0 of 0.

Power-play opportunities—Minnesota 0 of 1: Boston 0 of 0.

Shots on Goal—Kuemper 12-5-4 (28 shots-23 saves). Boston, Rask 13-14-4 (34-16).

A-17:565 (17,565). T-2:24.

Blues 3, Jets 1

St. Louis	0	1	2-3
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Second Period—1, St. Louis, Morrow 11 (Roy, Bouwmeester), 1:44.

Third Period—2, Winnipeg, O'Dell 3 (Kane, Bogosian), 1:55. 3, St. Louis, Backes

Second Period—1, St. Louis, Morrow 11 (Roy, Bouwmeester), 1:44.

Third Period—2, Winnipeg, Orell 3 (Kane, Rask), 10:51. 3, St. Louis, Backes 22 (Cole, Bouwmeester), 13:09 (pp.). 4, St. Louis, Backes 23 (Petragliore), 18:49 (en).

Shots on Goal—Winnipeg 7-5-5—17. St. Louis 16-7-25—25.

Power-play opportunities—Winnipeg 0 of 1: St. Louis 1 of 3.

Shots on Goal—Montoya 11-6-3 (25 shots-23 saves). St. Louis, Miller 22-4-17 (35).

A-16:668 (19,150). T-2:30.

Lightning 4, Canucks 3

Tampa Bay	0	0	3-3
1st Period—1, Tampa Bay, Stamkos 16 (Palat, Callahan), 17:56 (pp).	1	2	1-4

Second Period—2, Tampa Bay, Palat 18 (Carle), 6:54. 3, Tampa Bay, Filappula 22 (Stamkos), 19:51.

Third Period—4, Vancouver, Burrows 4 (Blekesa, Edler), 5:44 (pp.). 5, Tampa Bay, Palat 19 (Carle), 10:51.

Shots on Goal—Vancouver 7-8-13—28. Tampa Bay 10-13-7—30.

Power-play opportunities—Vancouver 1 of 3: Tampa Bay 1 of 4.

Shots on Goal—Vancouver, Lack 12-14-4 (30 shots-26 saves). Tampa Bay, Bishop 32-15-25 (25-25).

A-19:024 (19,204). T-2:25.

Coyotes 4, Kings 3

Phoenix	2	0	2-4
Los Angeles	1	2	0-3

First Period—1, Phoenix, Klinkhammer 11 (Vrbata, Hanzal), 6:33. 2, Phoenix, Boedker 17 (Ekman-Larsson, Vande), 7:36 (pp.). 3, Los Angeles, Pearson 2 (Stoll, Toroff), 17:02.

Second Period—1, Los Angeles, Martinez 8 (Carter), 6:50. 5, Los Angeles, Gabris 8 (Kopitar, Vanden), 10:51.

Third Period—6, Phoenix, Yandle 8, 9:44. 7, Phoenix, Halpern 4 (Doan, Chipchura), 16:55.

Shots on Goal—Phoenix 10-13-14—27. Los Angeles 12-15-15—32.

Power-play opportunities—Phoenix 1 of 4: Los Angeles 1 of 4.

Shots on Goal—Phoenix 26-20-10 (39 shots-26 saves). Los Angeles, Quin 21-15-27 (23-23).

A-18:118 (18,118). T-2:34.

Leaders

Through March 17

Scoring	GP	G	A	Pts
Sidney Crosby, Pit	67	31	57	88
Paul Kessel, Tor	69	34	39	73
Ryan Getzlaf, Anh	64	29	44	73
Tyler Seguin, Dal	65	30	39	69
Kyle Okposo, NYI	68	27	42	69
Claude Giroux, Phi	67	23	46	69
Mike Overkin, Was	65	23	38	68
Patrick Kane, Chi	67	29	39	68
Corey Perry, Ana	68	36	31	67

Goaltending

GP	GV	GA	GAA
Josh Harding, Min	29	690	4.65
Tuukka Rask, Bos	59	1411	100.207
Brian Elliott, NYI	26	584	49.207
Jonathan Quick, LA	39	933	80.210
Ben Bishop, TB	38	1480	107.211
Cory Schneider, NJ	36	895	75.212
Ben Scrivens, EDM	31	903	62.220
Jaroslav Halak, Was	45	1129	95.225
Corey Crawford, Chi	49	1289	106.226



JEFF ROBERSON/AP

The St. Louis Blues' David Backes, front, scores past Winnipeg Jets goalie Al Montoya during the third period of Monday's game in St. Louis.

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SPORTS BRIEFS

Auburn hires former Tennessee coach Pearl

The Associated Press

AUBURN, Ala. — Auburn hired former Tennessee coach Bruce Pearl on Tuesday to revive a struggling basketball program that hasn't been to the NCAA tournament in more than a decade.

The school announced the hiring of the charismatic coach, who remains under a show-cause penalty from the NCAA into August. Pearl had plenty of success on the court, taking Tennessee to the NCAA tournament in each of his six seasons before getting fired in March 2011 in the wake of an NCAA investigation.

Spokesmen for Auburn and the NCAA did not immediately respond to emails regarding the show-cause status.

"I'm humbled and blessed to be back in the game that I love," Pearl, who turned 54 on Tuesday, said in a statement. "I don't know how long it will take, but it's time to rebuild the Auburn basketball program, and bring it to a level of excellence so many of the other teams on campus enjoy."

Auburn did not release terms of the deal with Pearl, who was to be formally introduced Tuesday night.

Pearl replaces Tony Barbee, who was fired about two hours after the Tigers lost to South Carolina in the first round of the Southeastern Conference tournament. They went 18-50 in the SEC during Barbee's four-year tenure, which coincided with the opening of the \$90 million Auburn Arena.

Pearl was cited for unethical conduct for lying to investigators in June 2010 about improperly hosting recruits at his home. He was placed under a three-year show-cause penalty, which expires in late August.

It barred Pearl from recruiting during that span and any school seeking to hire him would have to ask the NCAA to remove that penalty.

He also was found to have interfered with the NCAA's investigation after he contacted a recruit's father who had also been interviewed by investigators.

Two months after his initial interview, he met again with NCAA investigators to tell them he had misled them.

Jackson returns to Knicks

NEW YORK — Phil Jackson has returned to the New York Knicks as their team president.

The Knicks announced Jackson's hiring on Tuesday at a news conference in the lobby of Madison Square Garden, where a giant sign reading "Welcome Home Phil" was overhead and shirts with the No. 18 Jackson wore as a player lined the racks in the merchandise store.

Jackson signed a five-year contract that will reportedly pay him at least \$12 million annually.

"This is the best place to play basketball," Jackson said.

Jackson was a member of the Knicks' NBA-winning teams in 1970 and 1973, but they haven't won a title since. Jackson went on to become the league's most successful coach, winning 11 championships with the



KERRY SMITH/AP

Tennessee head coach Bruce Pearl reacts during the second half of game on March 6, 2010 in Starkville, Miss. Auburn hired Pearl on Tuesday to lead its struggling basketball program. Pearl remains under a show-cause penalty from the NCAA.

Chicago Bulls and Los Angeles Lakers.

This will be his first time as an executive and the Knicks say he will be in charge of all basketball decisions. MSG chairman James Dolan said he "willingly and gratefully" was stepping back to give Jackson the power to make the changes the franchise needs.

Steve Mills will remain as general manager.

Cardinals re-sign McCann

TEMPE, Ariz. — The Arizona Cardinals re-signed backup cornerback Bryan McCann to a one-year deal Monday.

McCann played in the final six games last season and had two special teams tackles for the Cardinals. The team did not disclose financial terms.

McCann re-signed with the Cardinals last Nov. 19 after spending the offseason and training camp with Arizona.

In 35 NFL games, McCann has 29 tackles on defense, one sack, one interception and nine special teams tackles.

In other NFL news:

■ The Jacksonville Jaguars signed free

agent receiver Tandon Doss, giving the team a big target to complement Cecil Shorts III and Ace Sanders.

The 6-foot-2 Doss also could return punts for the Jaguars. His 15.6 yards per return led the NFL last year.

Niese back with Mets

PORST ST. LUCIE, Fla. — Jonathon Niese was relieved to be back at spring training with the New York Mets camp on Tuesday after receiving a relatively good medical report.

The left-hander had a MRI of his pitching elbow in New York on Monday, and the scan revealed he had some inflammation but no damage to his ulnar collateral ligament.

"They said the UCL is strong and big and strong — no bone arthritis or spurs or anything," Niese said. "So all the bones and ligaments are perfect. There's just a little inflammation in that joint in the back of my elbow. So I got a cortisone shot. It's a little sore today from the shot, but the soreness is going down. So I should be able to throw tomorrow."

Niese has a 13.50 ERA in two spring training appearances. He was slowed early in camp by muscle weakness in his shoulder, which also was examined in a main stream MRI.

Four Georgia players arrested

ATLANTA — Four Georgia football players were released on bond late Monday following their arrests on misdemeanor charges of theft by deception.

University of Georgia chief of police Jimmy Williamson said Tuesday an investigation found that three players — starting safety Tray Matthews, defensive lineman Jonathan Taylor and James DeLoach — received double payments for stipend checks of \$71.50 issued by the Georgia athletic department.

The players deposited the paper checks through a mobile device and also cashed the checks at a convenience store, according to Williamson.

Wide receiver Uriah LeMay was charged with cashing a roommate's check after the check already had been deposited through a mobile app, according to Williamson.

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NBA

Roundup

Nuggets snap Clippers' 11-game winning streak

The Associated Press

DENVER — Blake Griffin shouldered the blame for his team faltering down the stretch.

"This game is pretty much entirely on me," Griffin said matter-of-factly.

Well, maybe not entirely true. After all, Los Angeles was held scoreless for the final 3:31, allowing the Denver Nuggets to end the Clippers' 11-game winning streak with a 110-100 victory Monday night.

Chris Paul couldn't score down the stretch, either. Just one of those nights for the fatigued Clippers, who played the night before.

Just like that, their streak — tied for the second-longest in franchise history — was over. This is the same place where their longest streak, 17 in a row last season, was also ended.

"Players like to get up for this team," said Ty Lawson, who scored eight of his 19 points in a late fourth-quarter run. "The energy in the building gets us going."

Lately, the Nuggets are showing they can play with the NBA's elite, beating the Miami Heat last week and now the soaring Clippers.

Only, it's a little too late for a team pretty much out of the play-off picture.

"But it's huge, especially for our confidence going forward," Lawson said.

Reserve J.J. Hickson had 21 points and Kenneth Faried added 18 points and 16 rebounds in a duel in the paint against Griffin, who finished with 26 points and 12 boards.

But this was far from Griffin's night, finishing 7-for-25 from the floor.

"I can't play that poorly for us to win," said Griffin, who was 12-for-12 from the free-throw line. "I tried. Just too many missed shots. Too many small errors here and there."

Pacers 97, 76ers 90: Lance Stephenson scored 25 points as Indiana came back from an early deficit to hand Philadelphia its franchise-record 21st straight loss.

Paul George had 24 points for the Pacers, who staked the Sixers to a 15-6 lead before taking the lead and pulling away. George Hill scored 11 points, Ian Mahinmi had 10 and David West grabbed 12 rebounds.

Thaddeus Young had 23 points to lead the Sixers, who tied the Detroit Pistons for the sixth-longest losing streak in NBA history. The Pistons lost 21 straight bridging the 1979-80 and 1980-81 seasons.

Hawks 97, Bobcats 83: Paul



DAVID ZALUBOWSKI/AP

Los Angeles Clippers guard Chris Paul, front, is trapped by Denver guard Randy Foye, left, and forward J.J. Hickson during the second quarter of Monday's game in Denver.

Millspaugh scored 28 points as Atlanta ended Charlotte's eight-game home winning streak.

It was Atlanta's 11th straight win over Charlotte. The Hawks have won four straight, pulling within 1½ games of the Bobcats for the seventh spot in the Eastern Conference playoff race.

Nets 108, Suns 95: Deron Williams scored 28 points and even dunked for the first time this season, leading Brooklyn past Phoenix and extending its home winning streak to nine.

Williams shot 11-for-13 from the field and looks all the way back after ankle problems wrecked the first half of his season. He was two points off his season high and rose above the rim to throw down a dunk that finished off a fourth-quarter fast break started by Andrei Kirilenko's steal.

Thunder 97, Bulls 85: Kevin Durant finished with 35 points and 12 rebounds as visiting Oklahoma City beat Chicago.

Russell Westbrook added 17 points after sitting out the previous day to rest his surgically repaired knee, and the Thunder

rebounded from their most lopsided loss of the season. They went on a 13-point run after the Bulls scored eight straight early in the fourth to cut the lead to one and pulled this one out after falling by 23 at home to Dallas on Sunday.

Rockets 124, Jazz 86: Terrence Jones scored 30 points as host Houston ended a three-game skid with its most lopsided victory of the season.

Dwight Howard was out with an ankle strain, leaving the Rockets without him for the first time this season. But they still had no problem handling Utah, which has lost five in a row and has one of the worst records in the Western Conference.

Mavericks 94, Celtics 89: Dirk Nowitzki led another balanced scoring effort with 19 points (14 in overtime) as Dallas opened a club-record eight-game homestand by holding on for a victory over Boston.

The Celtics trailed by double digits twice in the second half before getting within one in the final minute but couldn't avoid an 0-15 finish on the road against the Western Conference.

Scoreboard

Eastern Conference

Atlantic Division			
	W	L	Pct
Toronto	28	26	.519
Brooklyn	34	31	.523
New York	27	40	.403
Boston	22	36	.379
Philadelphia	15	52	.224

Southeast Division			
	W	L	Pct
x-Miami	45	19	.703
Washington	35	31	.530
Charlotte	33	35	.485
Atlanta	30	35	.462
Orlando	30	36	.459

Central Division			
	W	L	Pct
x-Indiana	50	17	.746
Chicago	30	30	.500
Cleveland	26	41	.388
Detroit	25	41	.379
Milwaukee	13	54	.194

Western Conference			
Southwest Division			
	W	L	Pct
San Antonio	50	16	.758
Houston	45	22	.675
Dallas	41	27	.603
Memphis	39	27	.591
New Orleans	27	39	.409

Northwest Division			
	W	L	Pct
Oklahoma City	49	13	.788
Portland	43	24	.642
Minnesota	33	32	.508
Denver	30	47	.390
Utah	22	46	.324

Pacific Division			
	W	L	Pct
L.A. Clippers	41	21	.666
Golden State	42	26	.615
Phoenix	38	29	.567
Sacramento	23	44	.343
L.A. Lakers	22	44	.333

Monday's games			
Indiana 95, Philadelphia 90			
Atlanta 97, Charlotte 83			
Brooklyn 108, Phoenix 95			
Oklahoma City 97, Chicago 85			
Houston 124, Utah 86			
Dallas 94, Boston 89			
Denver 110, L.A. Lakers 100			

Tuesday's games			
Miami at Cleveland			
Toronto at Atlanta			
Milwaukee at Portland			
Washington at Sacramento			
Orlando at Golden State			

Wednesday's games			
Chicago at Philadelphia			
Charlotte at Brooklyn			
Miami at Boston			
Toronto at New Orleans			
Atlanta at Memphis			
Marion at New Orleans			
Indiana at New York			
Minnesota at Dallas			
Detroit at Denver			
Orlando at Phoenix			
San Antonio at L.A. Lakers			

Monday			
Hawks 97, Bobcats 83			
Atlanta — Carroll 4-9-0-9, Millsap 12-20-2-2, Antie 4-10-0-11, Teague 4-10-0-11, Korver 3-8-2-2-10, Brand 2-3-0-4, Mack 2-6-0-5, Scott 5-10-0-11, Schroder 3-1-6, Martin 0-0-0-0, Muscala 1-2-1-3, Totals 39-85-67-97			

Charlotte			
McRoberts 2-10-0-13, Livingston 6-15-4-4, Walker 7-18-2-2-20, Henderson 5-12-4-4, Mercurio 1-1-2-3-5-8, Turner 6-11-0-0, Douglas-Roberts 1-1-3, Ridnour 1-3-0-3, Blyumbe 2-2-0-4, Tolliver 1-4-0-0-2, Totals 30-82-14-63			

Atlanta			
Charlotte — Millsap 22-24-30-21-97, Jefferson 11-12-3-5-8, Livingston 6-11-0-0, Teague 3-8-2-2-10, Brand 2-3-0-4, Mack 2-6-0-5, Scott 5-10-0-11, Schroder 3-1-6, Martin 0-0-0-0, Muscala 1-2-1-3, Totals 39-85-67-97			

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Charlotte — Millsap 22-24-30-21-97, Jefferson 11-12-3-5-8, Livingston 6-11-0-0, Teague 3-8-2-2-10, Brand 2-3-0-4, Mack 2-6-0-5, Scott 5-10-0-11, Schroder 3-1-6, Martin 0-0-0-0, Muscala 1-2-1-3, Totals 39-85-67-97			

Charlotte			
McRoberts 2-10-0-13, Livingston 6-15-4-4, Walker 7-18-2-2-20, Henderson 5-12-4-4, Mercurio 1-1-2-3-5-8, Turner 6-11-0-0, Douglas-Roberts 1-1-3, Ridnour 1-3-0-3, Blyumbe 2-2-0-4, Tolliver 1-4-0-0-2, Totals 30-82-14-63			

Pacers 99, 76ers 90

Indiana 95, Philadelphia 90			
Atlanta 97, Charlotte 83			
Brooklyn 108, Phoenix 95			
Oklahoma City 97, Chicago 85			
Houston 124, Utah 86			
Dallas 94, Boston 89			
Denver 110, L.A. Lakers 100			

Southeast Division			
	W	L	Pct
x-Miami	45	19	.703
Washington	35	31	.530
Charlotte	33	35	.485
Atlanta	30	35	.462
Orlando	30	36	.459

Central Division			
	W	L	Pct
x-Indiana	50	17	.746
Chicago	30	30	.500
Cleveland	26	41	.388
Detroit	25	41	.379
Milwaukee	13	54	.194

Western Conference			
Southwest Division			
	W	L	Pct
San Antonio	50	16	.758
Houston	45	22	.675
Dallas	41	27	.603
Memphis	39	27	.591
New Orleans	27	39	.409

Northwest Division			
	W	L	Pct
Oklahoma City	49	13	.788
Portland	43	24	.642
Minnesota	33	32	.508
Denver	30	47	.390
Utah	22	46	.324

Pacific Division			
	W	L	Pct
L.A. Clippers	41	21	.666
Golden State	42	26	.615
Phoenix	38	29	.567
Sacramento	23	44	.343
L.A. Lakers	22	44	.333

Monday's games			
Indiana 95, Philadelphia 90			
Atlanta 97, Charlotte 83			
Brooklyn 108, Phoenix 95			
Oklahoma City 97, Chicago 85			
Houston 124, Utah 86			
Dallas 94, Boston 89			
Denver 110, L.A. Lakers 100			

Tuesday's games			
Miami at Cleveland			
Toronto at Atlanta			
Milwaukee at Portland			
Washington at Sacramento			
Orlando at Golden State			

Wednesday's games			
Chicago at Philadelphia			
Charlotte at Brooklyn			
Miami at Boston			
Toronto at New Orleans			
Atlanta at Memphis			
Marion at New Orleans			
Indiana at New York			
Minnesota at Dallas			
Detroit at Denver			
Orlando at Phoenix			
San Antonio at L.A. Lakers			

Monday			
Hawks 97, Bobcats 83			
Atlanta — Carroll 4-9-0-9, Millsap 12-20-2-2, Antie 4-10-0-11, Teague 4-10-0-11, Korver 3-8-2-2-10, Brand 2-3-0-4, Mack 2-6-0-5, Scott 5-10-0-11, Schroder 3-1-6, Martin 0-0-0-0, Muscala 1-2-1-3, Totals 39-85-67-97			

Charlotte			
McRoberts 2-10-0-13, Livingston 6-15-4-4, Walker 7-18-2-2-20, Henderson 5-12-4-4, Mercurio 1-1-2-3-5-8, Turner 6-11-0-0, Douglas-Roberts 1-1-3, Ridnour 1-3-0-3, Blyumbe 2-2-0-4, Tolliver 1-4-0-0-2, Totals 30-82-14-63			

Atlanta			
Charlotte — Millsap 22-24-30-21-97, Jefferson 11-12-3-5-8, Livingston 6-11-0-0, Teague 3-8-2-2-10, Brand 2-3-0-4, Mack 2-6-0-5, Scott 5-10-0-11, Schroder 3-1-6, Martin 0-0-0-0, Muscala 1-2-1-3, Totals 39-85-67-97			

verley 2-4, Harden 2-4, Lin 1-2, Canaan 1-2, Motiejunas 1-3, Parsons 0-2). Fouled out—Motiejunas. Rebounds—Utah 39 (Walker 10, Motiejunas 10, Canaan 10, Verley 9), Houston 54 (Asik, Motiejunas 10). Assists—Utah 21 (Burke 5), Houston 20 (Lin 9). Total Fouls—Utah 25, Houston 24 (Lin 10, Asik 10, Canaan 10, Verley 4, Motiejunas 1, Parsons 0).

NCAA TOURNAMENT



DAVID BECKER/AP

New Mexico State's Sim Bhullar, right, grabs a rebound against Idaho's Bira Seck on Saturday.

Bhullar stands in way for San Diego State

By BERNIE WILSON
The Associated Press

SAN DIEGO — Steve Fisher cut down the final net in the NCAA tournament 25 years ago and reached two other national championship games, so he knows about playing deep into March.

He'd like to think his fourth-seeded San Diego State Aztecs can advance beyond the opening weekend this year. To have that chance, the defensive-minded Aztecs first will have to get past an intriguing matchup Thursday night in Spokane against 13th-seeded New Mexico State and its big, big man, 7-foot-5, 355-pound center Sim Bhullar.

Aztecs forward Winston Shepard recalls beating Bhullar in high school.

"All I can really remember is we had a triple team on him and he was just dunked on," Shepard said Monday.

Was he in on that triple team? "No, no. I don't get dunked on," Shepard said.

Have the Aztecs ever played against someone that big?

"No, I don't think anybody in America has," said Fisher, who has the Aztecs in the NCAA tournament for the fifth straight year and seventh time overall since taking over SDSU's previously sad-sack program starting with the 1999-2000 season. "He's a big, big man. Everything about him is so much better than it was a year

ago. I believe he's only a sophomore. He will be someone who will make it difficult on us like he has on everybody he's played this year."

Fisher says Bhullar "is a force. He's a hard guy to maneuver around, and they throw it to him early and often in that low post. They are like us — they have made more free throws than their opponents have shot. I can see why after watching tape on him."

The biggest opponents the Aztecs have played against are Alex Kirk and Cameron Bairstow of New Mexico, which beat SDSU two of three times this season, including in the Mountain West Conference tournament championship game Saturday night.

Bhullar is at least five inches taller than Bairstow and Kirk, and 100 pounds heavier.

"It's going to take a team effort. Everybody just being in held position," forward Josh Davis said. "The main thing is to just try to keep it out of the post."

If Bhullar isn't enough of a load, "they have another 6-9, 250-pounder who looks small by comparison," Fisher said of Tshilidzi Nephawe, who is 6-10 and 265 pounds.

Bhullar's average of 10.3 points is fourth behind Daniel Mullings (16.8), DK Eldridge (11.5) and Nephawe (11.1). Bhullar does lead the Aggies with 7.9 rebounds, while Nephawe averages 7.8.

New format may force top seeds to play on the road

Women's coaches critical of NCAA's effort to boost attendance

By STEVE MEGARGEY
The Associated Press

KNOXVILLE, Tenn. — The NCAA's drive to boost attendance for its women's tournament could force three No. 1 seeds to go on the road and beat lower-seeded teams on their home floor to advance.

Coaches criticized the NCAA's decision last summer to allow schools to host regionals, saying it could give teams an unfair advantage. Their concerns were realized Monday night with the release of the NCAA tournament pairings.

Though the NCAA already has announced it's going back to neutral regional sites starting in 2015, teams must live with the format this year.

Carolayne Henry, chair of the Division I women's basketball committee, said, "We knew there was a possibility this could happen" when the NCAA decided to have schools host regionals this year.

Defending national champion Connecticut could meet No. 4 seed Nebraska at Lincoln in a regional semifinal. Tennessee, the No. 1 seed in the Louisville Regional, might end up facing Louisville in the regional final. South Carolina, the No. 1 seed in the Stanford Regional, may have to beat Stanford at Maples Pavilion with a Final Four berth at stake.

"That's the way they decided to do it this year, to have the regionals at home sites of schools, so we've got to go with it," Tennessee coach Holly Warlick said. "We've been on the other end. We've hosted regionals (in the past) and won. ... It's a big factor. It's a big plus for you."

Louisville, Nebraska, Notre Dame and Stanford were chosen in October as host sites. Notre Dame was the only team from that group to earn a No. 1 seed. Tennessee didn't bid to host a regional because of a scheduling conflict at Thompson-Boling Arena. Connecticut coach Geno

'If we played Baylor at Baylor last year, I'm not sure we win that game.'

Jeff Walz

Coach of defending champ Louisville on playing at neutral sites

Auriemma said his school didn't bid because he didn't like the concept of having schools host regionals.

"I don't believe in it," Auriemma said. "I don't think it's fair and I told our administration, 'We're passing on it. I don't want to do it.' So we didn't."

Louisville coach Jeff Walz also doesn't like the idea of host sites for the regional rounds. Walz cited Louisville's 82-81 upset of top-ranked Baylor in last year's Oklahoma City Regional semifinal as evidence.

"I use us as an example," Walz said. "If we played Baylor at Baylor last year, I'm not sure we win that game ... I'm a big proponent of playing regionals on neutral floors, and I'm excited that we're going to back to."

The decision to have schools host regionals was made in an effort to draw bigger crowds.

Last season, the NCAA posted an average attendance of 5,883 for all tournament games, a 21 percent increase over 2012. But the tournament had posted average attendances of at least 6,400 every year from 1998-2005.

The average attendance for regional rounds last year was 7,100, a 38-percent increase over 2012 but a far cry from 10 to 15 years ago. Average attendance in the regional rounds had been over 8,000 five times in a seven-year stretch from 1998-2004.

"I think home courts are a real part of the women's tournament as opposed to the men's tournament," Stanford coach Tara VanDerveer said.

But the move creates some potentially odd scenarios.

Connecticut would have to beat Nebraska on the Cornhuskers' home floor in the regional semifinals if both teams win their first two tournament games. If the fourth-seeded Huskers get to a regional final, they could host No. 2 seed Duke or No. 3 seed Texas A&M.

Louisville, the No. 3 seed in its own regional, could end up hosting No. 2 seed West Virginia in a regional semifinal and top seed Tennessee in a regional championship.

Next year, the regionals will be back at neutral sites.

Auriemma has one idea for helping those neutral sites draw big crowds.

"We do have to find, I think, four cities that are hotbeds or potentially, for women's basketball and we've got to give them an opportunity to host the regionals, and give it to them for a few years at a time, instead of just a one-shot deal," Auriemma said.

Although the NCAA still plans to have schools serve as host sites for the first two rounds of the tournament next year, those schools won't be determined before the season. The schools chosen as the top 16 seeds for the tournament will host first- and second-round games.

"There will be no drama about where you'll be sent," Notre Dame coach Muffet McGraw said. "Then there will be neutral sites for the regionals. That's the way to do it. It's too hard for the committee to have to piece it together and move people around because of whose hosting and who's not hosting. I think it will make their job so much easier."

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NCAA WOMEN'S TOURNAMENT

Stop. Irish only other undefeated

FROM BACK PAGE

previous three seasons. Notre Dame isn't intimidated by Connecticut; the Irish have won seven of the past nine meetings with the Huskies.

"It was very unusual to go through a whole season without playing them, we're so used to it, three times every year," McGraw said. "We've gotten pretty good at beating them the last couple of years."

Before the potential meeting of unbeaten, the two might have to go through SEC powers Tennessee and South Carolina, who also earned No. 1 seeds. While it's the 22nd time that the Lady Vols have earned a top spot, it's the first for the Gamecocks. The Huskies, Lady Vols and Gamecocks all could have to play on an opponent's home court with a trip to Nashville on the line. Stanford, Notre Dame, Louisville and Nebraska, who are all hosting regionals, were a combined 52-3 at home this season.

The Lady Vols, who won the SEC tournament championship, are the top seed in the Louisville Regional and would also like nothing more than to break the tie with Connecticut and win their ninth NCAA title. They open up against Northwestern State and will be trying to end a five-year drought of not making the Final Four. The Lady Vols won't have an easy path. West Virginia is the second seed. Host Louisville is the three seed and Maryland is the four.

Tennessee was involved in the only other meeting between the unbeaten. The Lady Vols routed Liberty in the opener of the 1998 tournament when both were undefeated.

Like their SEC rivals, South Carolina doesn't have an easy road to the Final Four. The Gamecocks could face an inspired young North Carolina team in the regional semifinals before potentially playing host Stanford.

The Tar Heels and their stellar freshman class, led by Diamond Deshields, beat the Gamecocks in December. The Tar Heels also could have coach Sylvia Hatchell back on the sidelines at that point. The Hall of Famer battled leukemia during the regular season.

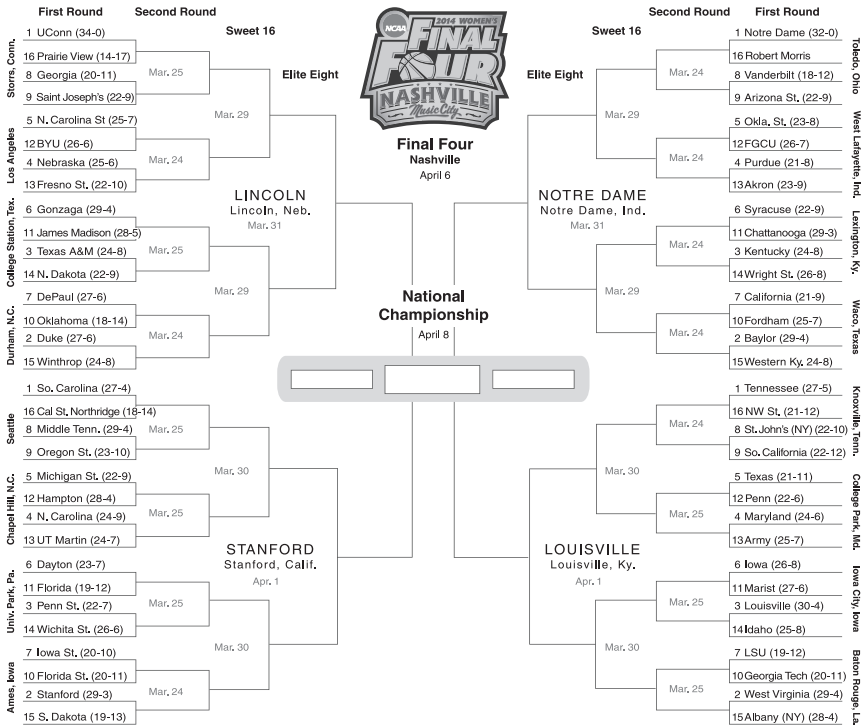
While Hatchell's status is unknown for the tournament, Baylor will be missing coach Kim Mulkey for the first game. She is suspended for the first round game against Western Kentucky

'We've gotten pretty good at beating them the last couple of years.'

Muffet McGraw

Notre Dame women's basketball coach on playing Connecticut

Women's Division I Basketball Championship



for comments she made last season after losing to Louisville in the regional semifinals.

"I haven't talked to the team in depth about me not coaching in the first game," Mulkey said. "I'll watch it on television at home. ... I always tell the team something could happen to me on that sideline and you should be able to coach yourself."

Connecticut could have to beat host Nebraska in the regional semifinals if both teams make it that far. The Huskies have made it to the Final Four in a record six straight seasons. They hope to make it to Nashville to keep that streak alive.

If the Huskies do win the national championship it would be the fifth time they went undefeated in a season. This would be the first time that they won 40 games, joining Baylor as the only teams ever to accomplish that feat.

The defending national champions have won games by an average of 36 points. They open up at home against Prairie View A&M on Sunday night. The Lady Panthers become the ninth team to reach the NCAA tournament with a losing record when they won the Southwestern Conference championship. Tennessee will be making its



JESSICA HILL/AP

Connecticut head coach Geno Auriemma and his team have made it to the Final Four in a record six straight season, and the defending national champions have won games by an average of 36 points.

33rd straight appearance in the NCAA tournament, getting into the field every year. Five teams will be making their first trip —

Akron, North Dakota, South Dakota, Winthrop and Wright State. While those schools will be getting their first taste of the

NCAAs, Chattanooga's Jim Foster became the first coach to take four different teams to the NCAA tournament.

NCAA TOURNAMENT

Games on AFN



Cal Poly vs. Texas Southern
AFN-Sports
11:30 p.m. Wednesday CET
7:30 a.m. Thursday JKT



Michigan State vs. Delaware
AFN-Pacific
9:30 p.m. Thursday CET
5:30 a.m. Friday JKT



Iowa vs. Tennessee
AFN-Sports
2 a.m. Thursday CET
10 a.m. Thursday JKT



Michigan vs. Wofford
AFN-Pacific
Midnight Thursday CET
8 a.m. Friday JKT



Ohio State vs. Dayton
AFN-Sports
5 p.m. Thursday CET
1 a.m. Friday JKT



Saint Louis vs. NC State/Xavier
AFN-Pacific
Midnight Thursday CET
8 a.m. Friday JKT



Wisconsin vs. American
AFN-Xtra
5:30 p.m. Thursday CET
1:30 a.m. Friday JKT



Oklahoma vs. N. Dakota State
AFN-Xtra
12:15 a.m. Thursday CET
8:15 a.m. Friday JKT



Cincinnati vs. Harvard
AFN-Pacific
7 p.m. Thursday CET
3 a.m. Friday JKT



Louisville vs. Manhattan
AFN-Pacific
2:30 a.m. Thursday CET
10:30 a.m. Friday JKT



Syracuse vs. W. Michigan
AFN-Sports
7:30 p.m. Thursday CET
3:30 a.m. Friday JKT



Texas vs. Arizona State
AFN-Sports
2:30 a.m. Friday CET
10:30 a.m. Friday JKT



Oregon vs. BYU
AFN-Xtra
8 p.m. Thursday CET
4 a.m. Friday JKT



San Diego St. vs. N. Mexico St.
AFN-Xtra
2:55 a.m. Friday CET
10:55 a.m. Friday JKT



Bob Levey/AP

Stephen F. Austin players celebrate after winning the Southland Conference tournament championship on Saturday in Katy, Texas. The Lumberjacks enter the NCAA tournament on a 28-game winning streak and are one of only four teams in the field with more than 30 victories. The other three are No. 1 seeds.

Balanced, 'positionless' Lumberjacks are on a roll

By SCHUYLER DIXON
The Associated Press

Stephen F. Austin stands out among potential NCAA tournament darlings this March.

Start with a 28-game winning streak, second in the country behind undefeated and No. 1 seed Wichita State. Then take a look at floppy-haired Southland Conference player of the year Jacob Parker and clean-cut sidekick Thomas Walkup, who made sure the Lumberjacks didn't miss out on the Big Dance after a big season for the second straight year.

How about Brad Underwood, a nearly 30-year veteran in his first season as a Division I head coach — and now tied for third in wins among Division I debuts after leading the Lumberjacks (31-2) to the first 30-win season in Southland history.

"Thirty's a hard number," said Underwood, who went to the NCAA tournament four times in six years as an assistant at Kansas State. "I don't care who you've played. Go beat the worst team in the country 30 times. You're probably going to slip up."

SFA is the 12th seed in the South Region, playing Friday in San Diego against VCU, one of the few double-digit seeds to reach the Final Four when the Rams made it to Houston at No. 11 in 2011.

It's the best seeding for a Southland team since Karl Malone led Louisiana Tech to the Sweet 16 from the No. 5 spot in 1985. Malone's team also had the record for wins in the Southland at 29 before SFA broke it in the tournament semifinals.

"When coach Underwood got here, he said he wanted to have everyday guys and since the summer we've been putting in work," said Parker, who was the leading scorer until guard Desmond Haymon slipped by him during the Southland tournament. "We're having a blast this year. We love the staff, love the team. It's just enjoyable every single day."

The Lumberjacks are the talk of Nacogdoches, a college town in the piney woods of East Texas that's also the hometown of U.S. soccer star Clint Dempsey. The buzz has been building since November — the last time SFA lost.

The 66-58 defeat at East Tennessee State on Nov. 23 came about a week after the Lumberjacks were even with NCAA qualifier Texas late in what ended up being a 10-point loss.

Since those two losses in three games, SFA has beaten everybody with a motion offense that has five players averaging at least 9.6 points per game and an active man-to-man defense that is among the national leaders in turnover margin. The Lumberjacks have a 33-game home winning streak, tied

Did you know

Stephen F. Austin has five players who averaged 9.6 points or more per game, and all five hit 35 percent or more of their three-point attempts.

SOURCE: CBSSports.com

with Duke for the longest in the nation.

"We're positionless other than really our point guard," Underwood said. "The more we got into our year, it just created mismatch problems. Our guys became confident in it and we shoot it from every spot and we're a very, very good passing team. So it became a great fit."

Underwood gives a lot of credit to Haymon, a senior who remembered the looks on the faces of those whose last chance to go the NCAA tournament ended with a 68-66 loss to Northwestern State in the Southland title game a year ago, when the Lumberjacks finished 27-5.

Haymon scored 27 points to help hold off the Demons in the semifinals this year. Walkup took charge in the title game, scoring 19 points and 8-for-10 shooting.

"We didn't want to leave here two years in a row feeling the same way," Haymon said. "We had great leadership from everyone, and we are going to run with it."

Winning isn't new at SFA. Parker just had his third 20-win season in three years on campus, and the Lumberjacks are making their second NCAA trip five years after the first. It's not even the first 31-win season. SFA went 31-3 and finished third at the NAIA national tournament in 1971-72.

But winning like this is new. Pundits were instantly picking a win for the Lumberjacks when the bracket came out Sunday, something it's safe to say didn't happen when they were a No. 14 seed and lost to Syracuse 59-44 in the first round in 2009.

"I dream big," said Underwood, who has used the dream theme with his team all season. "Why put limitations on where we could go? I waited a long time to become a head coach. I've dreamed big my whole life. When you stop dreaming, you put limits on yourself."

It didn't take long for Underwood to get his Lumberjacks to believe.

NCAA TOURNAMENT

Maturing Zanna key to Pittsburgh's fate

By NATE BARNES
The Associated Press

PITTSBURGH — Pittsburgh's chances of ending its NCAA tournament disappointments will depend largely on the long arms and quick feet of center Talib Zanna.

It's a position the senior from Kaduna, Nigeria is finally comfortable with after years of struggling to play with confidence or consistency.

Zanna was named to the All-Atlantic Coast Conference tournament first team after averaging 17 points and 13 rebounds during the Panthers' three-game run to the semifinals.

It was the kind of head-turning performance that will certainly make eighth-seeded Colorado (23-11) take notice when they face the ninth-seeded Panthers (25-9) in the second round on Thursday in Orlando, Fla.

"He's a leader; he's a senior; and when you see him going, it just gets the ball rolling," Pitt senior forward Lamar Patterson said. "Everything was clicking."

All part of the plan for Pitt, which was basically a .500 team after losing emotional sparkplug Durrey Johnson for the season with a knee injury in mid-January. Pitt's postseason prospects appeared to be in jeopardy heading into the ACC tournament only to see them solidified by Zanna's dynamic play.

Zanna set the tone for his team Thursday when he shot at George Washington's conference. Then the NCAA mistakenly puts the logo for crosstown rival Georgetown on T-shirts for sale on the tournament website.

By George, what do the Colonials have to do for respect?

True, it's been a while since there was Selection Sunday joy at the Smith Center. GW (24-8) is back in the ECAs for the first time since 2007, earning a No. 9 seed in the East and a meeting with eighth-seeded Memphis on Friday in Raleigh, N.C.

"It was definitely an uphill battle, coming in here, building the program back up," said senior Isaiah Armwood, playing his second season at GW after transferring from Villanova. "But it was well worth it."

The Colonials were one of six Atlantic 10 teams to get a nod, and

After rolling the Demon Deacons, the fifth-seeded Panthers upset the fourth-seeded North Carolina on the back of an inspired performance by Zanna.

He dominated North Carolina's talented frontcourt featuring James Michael McAdoo, Kennedy Meeks and Brice Johnson, with 19 points and 21 rebounds in 34 minutes before fouling out.

Zanna said "we made our statement" as the Panthers beat a ranked team for the first time this season.

Even in defeat, Zanna was one of the best players on the court. He scored 12 points in the first half of the semifinals against Virginia but finished with 15 as the Cavaliers found ways to neutralize him with added pressure via double teams. Despite falling short of the ACC title game, Zanna thinks Pitt accomplished something in Greensboro.

"We needed a couple wins to have a better seed for the NCAA tournament," Zanna said. "We are the ninth seed right now and we cannot worry about it."

From coach Jamie Dixon's perspective, Zanna's play had a lot to do with health after dealing with a twisted ankle for the latter part of the season. Zanna certainly looked healthy while playing like one of the better big men in the country.

"We have been playing our best basketball this year at this point," Dixon said. "Talib seems healthy and Lamar is doing well." Zanna's attitude remains unchanged heading into the tournament. If the Panthers win

that's the first point of contention. Duke's Krzyzewski, concerned that his Atlantic Coast Conference might not get its fair share, implied before the field was announced that a half-dozen A-10s sounded a bit generous.

"I'll get in trouble probably for saying it," Krzyzewski said. "Like the Atlantic 10, they're a really good conference. I hear people saying there are six teams in there. Come on. I mean, they're good, but put them in our conference and go through the meat grinder that our conference has to go through."

GW coach Mike Lonergan responded: "I'm really happy for our conference having six teams go, no matter what Coach K and people say. I appreciate their loyalty to their own conference, but the facts speak for themselves. This league was terrific this year."

The cold hard facts: The ACC and A-10 went 8-8 against each other this season. Both got six teams in the tournament. GW, by the way, was 2-0, taking down Miami and Maryland.

Speaking of the Terrapins, they're not in the NCAA tournament and neither is Georgetown.



BOB LEVERONE/AP

Pittsburgh's Talib Zanna shoots over Virginia's Anthony Gill during their ACC tournament semifinal game on Saturday in Greensboro, N.C.

Thursday, they will likely face No. 1 overall seed Florida on Saturday.

For Pitt to have a shot at winning more than one game in this year's tournament — something the Panthers haven't done since 2009 — Zanna will not only have to continue to elevate his game but set the bar for the rest of his

team.

"I think the seed doesn't matter because a couple years back, a lot of (Pitt) teams had a No. 1 seed and in the first round they went down," Zanna said. "It's who has the heart to come out and dominate and play like they want it so bad, so that's the people who (are) going to win the tournament."

It's only the third time in more than 50 years (1993, 2005) that GW is dancing while the two behemoths in the area are not, making it all the more surreal that the NCAA have made the wrong logo — a gray "G" in place of a buff and blue "GW" — on some of the "March Madness Men's Basketball Championship" T-shirts on the organization's website Monday.

Still, if anyone knows how to use such slights, it's Lonergan. At the selection show party, he was still recovering from the loss to Virginia Commonwealth in the semifinals of the A-10 tournament.

"I lost my voice," he told the crowd. "I'm still trying to get those refs to call traveling on VCU."

Lonergan won a Division III national championship at Catholic in 2001 and took Vermont to four postseason tournaments. He went 10-21 and 13-17 at GW before this season's turnaround.

For another redemptive story, there's GW graduate student Maurice Creek, who left Indiana with a degree and a long medical rap sheet: dislocated left kneecap, stress fracture in right kneecap, torn left Achilles tendon.

VCU's Smart defends A-10's qualifications

By HANK KURZ JR.
The Associated Press

RICHMOND, Va. — Shaka Smart isn't amused by people taking shots at the strength of the Atlantic 10 Conference.

The Virginia Commonwealth coach said on Monday the A-10 needs to apologize to no one for getting six teams in the NCAA tournament, including five at-large bids, because they all earned the right to be included.

The Rams (26-8), who lost in the title game to Saint Joseph's, got an at-large bid along with other A-10 schools: Massachusetts (24-8), Saint Louis (26-6), George Washington (24-8) and Dayton (23-10). On Saturday, after Duke beat North Carolina State in the ACC semifinals, Blue Devils coach Mike Krzyzewski said he thought the Wolfpack deserved an at-large berth ahead of an A-10 team.

"I'll get in trouble probably for saying it. (I) like the Atlantic 10, they're a really good conference," Coach K said. "I hear people saying there are six teams in there. Come on. I mean, they're good, but put them in our conference and go through the meat grinder that our conference has to go through."

Smart said he sees no point in comparing leagues in discussing tournament viability. He added a coach lobbying for his league is one thing, but taking pot-shots at another league "is low-level."

"You kind of want to stand up for your league," he said. "... Let's just have a level of respect for each other and let's respect the nine people on the selection committee and the work they put into picking the 68 teams."

George Washington looking for respect

By JOSEPH WHITE
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — First, Mike Krzyzewski takes a shot at George Washington's conference. Then the NCAA mistakenly puts the logo for crosstown rival Georgetown on T-shirts for sale on the tournament website.

By George, what do the Colonials have to do for respect?

True, it's been a while since there was Selection Sunday joy at the Smith Center. GW (24-8) is back in the ECAs for the first time since 2007, earning a No. 9 seed in the East and a meeting with eighth-seeded Memphis on Friday in Raleigh, N.C.

"It was definitely an uphill battle, coming in here, building the program back up," said senior Isaiah Armwood, playing his second season at GW after transferring from Villanova. "But it was well worth it."

The Colonials were one of six Atlantic 10 teams to get a nod, and

But he still had eligibility left, so he enrolled in GW's Graduate School of Education and Human Development and this season hit the shot that beat Maryland.

"With all the injuries that he's gone through, he has a testimony for any athlete — professional, student-athletes, any athlete," said Pammy Morgan, Creek's mother. "Everybody said that he was washed up, that he was never going to play again. Look at what he's doing... He finally gets to dance. He actually gets out there and on his own two feet, on his own Achilles, on his own knees, and he gets to dance."



George Washington's Maurice Creek celebrates in the Atlantic 10 tournament.

SETH WENDEL/AP

NCAA TOURNAMENT

10 things to know about this year's field

By DAVE SKRETTA
The Associated Press

The posturing and politicking is finished. The field has been chosen, the bracket has been set and the madness of March has finally arrived in college basketball.

Having trouble making sense of it all? No problem. Here are 10 things you should know about this year's NCAA tournament:

1 First Four: The NCAA tournament hasn't started on Thursday for years, but there may be more interest than ever in the four "First Four" games played Tuesday and Wednesday in Dayton, Ohio. Sure, Albany and Mount St. Mary's are probably playing for a chance to be whipped by overall No. 1 seed Florida, and the winner of Cal Poly-Texas Southern will have to face unbeaten Wichita State. But the other two games feature some notable names: Iowa and Tennessee are vying to be the No. 11 seed and North Carolina State and Xavier will battle to be the No. 12 seed in the South Region.

"It didn't matter what seed or where we were going, I'm just excited for the opportunity," said the Hawkeyes' Aaron White. "We're in. That's all you can ask for."

2 Last four: The drama of Selection Sunday often centers on the teams that were left out, and this year was no different. SMU didn't have consecutive losses until ending the regular season with defeats to Louisville and Memphis, but a loss to Houston in its AAC tournament opener bumped the Mustangs from the NCAA tournament to the NIT. Florida State, Green Bay and Georgetown were also left hanging when the final teams were placed in the bracket.

3 Region to watch: Even coaches who land in other regions pointed to the Midwest as the most brutal road to the Final Four in Arlington, Texas. Along with the top-seeded Shockers, you have two of the hottest teams in the country in Louisville and Michigan — who played in last year's national title game — and perennial powerhouses Duke and Kentucky.

"You can analyze it a lot of different ways," said Kansas State coach Bruce Weber, whose team will face Kentucky in the 8-9 matchup on Friday in St. Louis. "We're going to have to play and it doesn't matter who you play. You've got to play good basketball."

4 Beware the 12 seeds: Just about every year, it seems a No. 12 seed rises up to knock off a No. 5 seed. Three of them did it last year in Oregon, Mississippi and California. And each of the 12-5 games in this year's tournament offers reason to be wary. Stephen F. Austin, which plays VCU, hasn't lost since November. North Dakota State heads into its game against Oklahoma featuring a dynamic playmaker in Taylor Braun. The winner of North Car-



Above: Tulsa's Tim Peele, left, and Barrett Hunter, right, celebrate with the Conference USA trophy as coach Danny Manning, background, claps after their 69-60 win over Louisiana Tech on Saturday. Could Tulsa be this year's "Cinderella"? As a player, Manning led Kansas to the 1988 national championship.

Below: Cal Poly, left, and North Carolina Central, right, are newcomers to the NCAA tournament.



olina State-Xavier will have some momentum heading into a game against No. 5 seed Saint Louis. And Ivy League champ Harvard will face Cincinnati.

5 If the shoe fits: Sure, the notion of a "Cinderella" has become cliché, but it's also one of the endearing elements of the NCAA tournament. So is there a team seeded lower than 12 that has a chance to make some noise? How about Tulsa, led by Danny Manning, in its opener against UCLA? After all, they called his 1988 championship Kansas team "Danny and the Miracles" for a reason. And don't forget the Golden Hurricane upset the Bruins in the first round of the 1994 tournament. "UCLA is a very talented team," Manning said. "They ended up winning the (Pac-12) tournament title. They played very well in that game and they've got really good players that I've seen and watched for a very long time. We've got our hands full, but I like the matchup."

6 Potential rematches: The NCAA selection does its best to make sure teams that faced each other in the regular season, such as con-



ference rivals, don't meet early in the NCAA tournament. But that doesn't mean there aren't some tasty potential rematches. Kansas could face New Mexico, a team it beat in December, if both win

their openers in the South region. Saint Joseph's could get a chance to avenge a 30-point whipping by No. 2 seed Villanova in the third round, and fifth-seeded Saint Louis could get another crack at Wichita State in the Sweet 16.

7 Blue bloods: There are 14 schools that have won multiple NCAA championships. All but two of them — Indiana and San Francisco — are in this year's field. The list is topped by UCLA, the fourth seed in the South, with its 11 national titles. The Bruins are joined there by No. 1 seed Florida and second-seeded Kansas. Oklahoma State won its titles as Oklahoma A&M, and is the No. 9 seed in the West. Cincinnati, UConn, North Carolina and Michigan State inhabit the East, and Duke, Kentucky and North Carolina State reside in the Midwest.

8 Newcomers: There are two newcomers to this year's party: Cal Poly and North Carolina Central. Cal Poly got in despite its 13-19 record when reserve guard Ridge Shipley hit a three-pointer with 13.7 seconds left for a 61-59 victory over Cal State Northridge in the Big West title game, and NC Central punched its ticket in only its seventh season in Division I by beating Morgan State 71-62 in the Mid-Eastern Athletic Conference title game.

"It's a testament to what these guys do — emotional stamina and mental toughness," said Cal Poly's Chris Eversley. "It started with the coaching staff and the guys we brought in — guys that were willing to buy into our program both offensively and defensively."

9 Odds: It was no surprise that Florida was installed as the early favorite to win the national championship by the Las Vegas casinos. Several that put out lines immediately after the bracket was revealed had the Gators at 4-1. Michigan State, Arizona and Kansas were in the next tier of favorites, followed by a group that included Wichita State, Virginia, Duke, Syracuse and Louisville.

10 Cooking: Several teams are going to feel right at home for their opening games of the tournament. And several teams are going to feel like it's a road game. Florida plays the Albany-Mount St. Mary's game in Orlando, and UCLA takes on Stephen F. Austin in San Diego. Syracuse heads down the road to Buffalo for its game against Western Michigan. Baylor will face Nebraska in San Antonio, Wisconsin plays American in Milwaukee, and Duke will open against Mercer in Raleigh, N.C.

"We're just excited to be in the tournament, first of all, and then being a 2 seed in Milwaukee, I mean, it's going to be playing close to home, just means you did something good this year," said the Badgers' Josh Gasser. "You get rewarded for what you've done."

SPORTS

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NCAA WOMEN'S TOURNAMENT



JESSICA HILL/AP

Connecticut's Kaleena Mosqueda-Lewis, left, drives past Louisville's Shoni Schimmel during the American Athletic Conference championship game. UConn drew the No. 1 seed in the NCAA tournament and is six wins away from another perfect season and a record ninth NCAA championship.

Can anyone stop Connecticut?



CHUCK BURTON/AP

Notre Dame's Kayla McBride, Ariel Braker and Natalie Achonwa celebrate during the ACC tournament semifinals. The Irish, who drew a No. 1 seed for the NCAA tournament, went undefeated in the regular season.

Irish, Vols, Gamecocks challenging unbeaten Huskies' bid for ninth title

By DOUG FEINBERG
The Associated Press

Geno Auriemma and his UConn Huskies have run through their opponents all season.

Few teams have been able to challenge the Hall of Fame coach and the Huskies, who have gone 34-0 while winning by an average of 36 points.

But now is when it matters. Auriemma has always considered a season's success on winning championships, instilling that in his teams. Six more victories would cap off another perfect season and give the Huskies a record ninth NCAA championship.

"We know what we want to do," UConn sophomore star Breanna Stewart said. "We know

that this is the best time for basketball and it's the most important time for basketball, but we keep it to ourself most of the time."

For that to happen, Stewart and the Huskies may have to beat longtime rival Notre Dame. The Irish also finished the regular season unbeaten and have felt almost unappreciated with most of the talk centered on the Huskies despite being the 13th women's team to go undefeated in the regular season.

"I like it because we can get a chip on our shoulder and head into the tournament with a bit of chip," she said.

Even though UConn and Notre Dame didn't play this season, the two teams know plenty about each other having met 12 times over the

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JOHN BAZEMORE/AP

Tennessee's Jordan Reynolds, left, and Isabelle Harrison



JASON GETZ/AP

South Carolina guard Khadijah Sessions

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Center Zanna carrying Pitt's hopes of ending tournament woes | **Page 30**

